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THE YADAV DILEMMA

EMERGING UNIVERSITIES
FUTURE READY

NAWAZUDDIN SIDDIQUI
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AUGUST 31, 2015 ₹40

INDIA TODAY

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TEAM MODI STICKY WICKET

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THE IMAGE OF HIS GOVERNMENT
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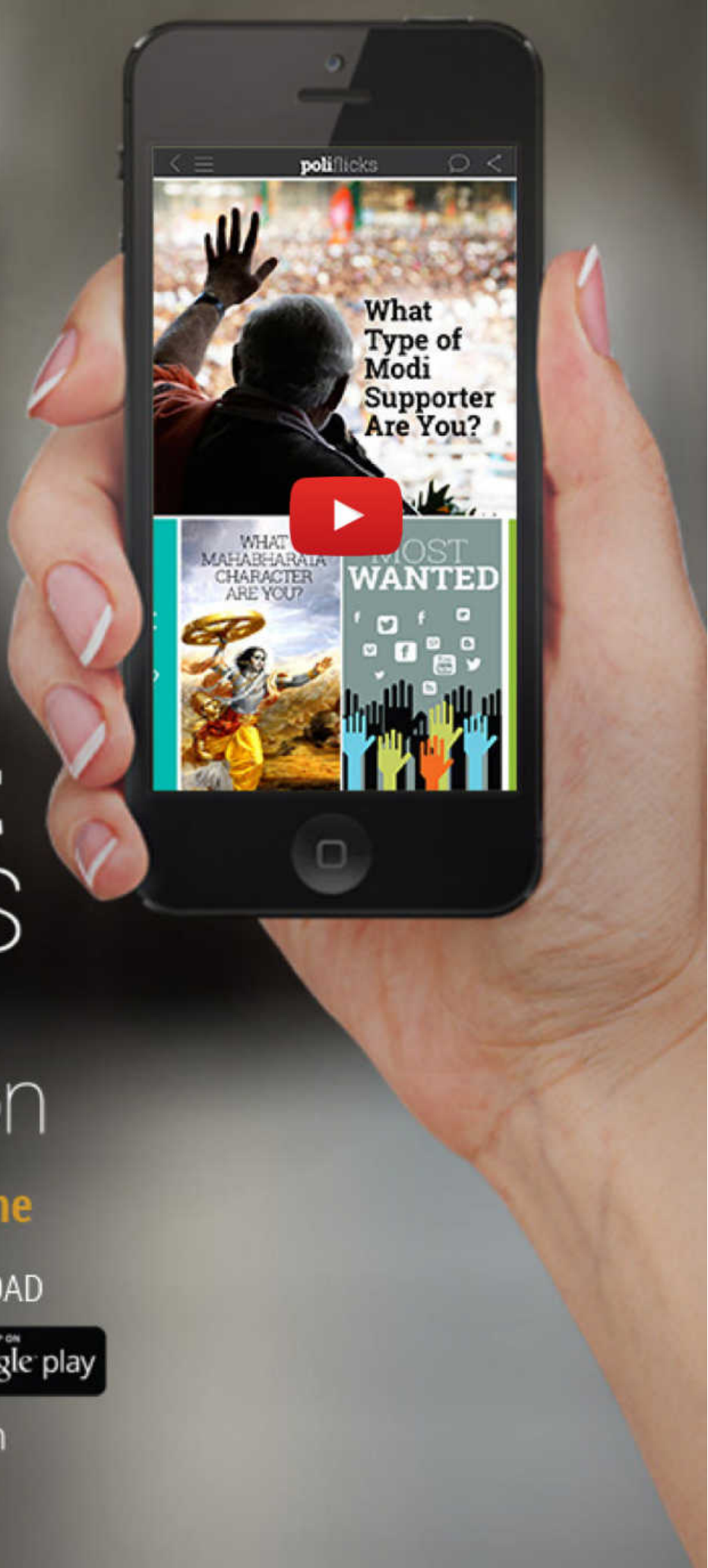


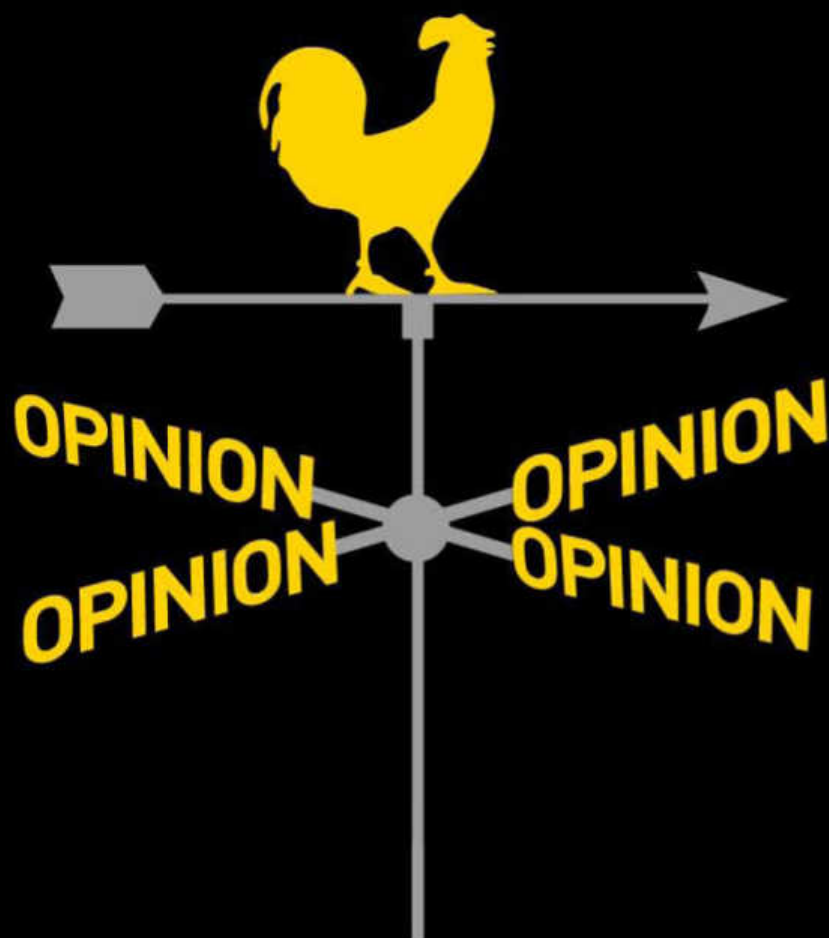
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FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Independence Day. 7.30 a.m. Narendra Modi delivers a 90-minute extempore speech, the longest by any prime minister in recent times. The next day, he leaves for a punishing two-day trip to the UAE. After returning late at night, he flies to Bihar the next morning to address two poll rallies. Just a sample of his work life. Modi is among the hardest-working prime ministers we've had. With this kind of commitment and dedication, one would expect that the nation would be happy with him and his government.


Well, it's a mixed bag for him. According to the India Today Group-Cicero Mood of the Nation Poll, India still has faith in Modi but not that much in his government. He is still considered the most suitable to be prime minister. In fact, that number is one percentage point up from our last survey in April to 37 per cent. However, 34 per cent feel his image is being tarnished by his ministers. As for his government, if the elections were held today, the BJP would slip to 243 seats in the Lok Sabha—down from 255 in our April findings and 282 in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections. The NDA coalition, too, would be down to 288 from 299 in our last survey—still enough to form the government but far from the giddy heights of 335 achieved in last year's election.

India is not an easy country to change. Although Modi has changed the perception of a paralytic scam-ridden government, many of the results are yet to be seen on the ground. Sterling projects such as Swachh Bharat, Make in India, Clean Ganga, Skill India and Digital India need to be pushed harder, considering his reputation as the Great Implementer which he earned as Gujarat's chief minister. I believe, a reason for the tepid performance of the government is a mixture of hubris, diversion into irrelevancies, lack of Parliamentary statecraft, and poor bench-strength. To get the fizz back, the government needs to do some signature acts which show it is serious about structural reforms. It is significant that the most mentioned word in his Independence Day speech was "gareeb"—42 times. Nothing wrong in that as we are a poor country, but where will the money for welfare come from if the economy does not grow? There was no mention of his much-vaunted Make in India campaign which was going to provide the one million jobs per month that India urgently needs. Incidentally, the survey shows that the number of people who think Modi is pro-rich has increased from the last survey. It stands at almost three times his pro-poor number. Is Modi losing his nerve for modernisation?

India is in desperate need for fundamental policy changes in major sectors such as banking, land, labour, railways, education, and the public sector. We are still waiting for policies that will herald BJP's 'minimum government, maximum governance' promise. That, to me, was the most important promise. It started well with the abolition of the Planning Commission, a Soviet-style Nehruvian hangover. But the Niti Aayog is today caught in the same bureaucratic web as its predecessor. Maybe this epitomises the sad tale of this government.

Our cover package details the various findings of the Mood of The Nation survey. Interestingly, less people feel the Congress can be revived in the next five years as compared to our April findings, showing that the Opposition too needs to do a lot of introspection.

I believe, a successful leader works within a conceptual framework which he and his team truly believe in. Margaret Thatcher was one such leader with a clear vision and followed it. She transformed Britain by taking on vested interests. If you shy away from battling those which come in the way of your ideas, you will be just another politician. When Candidate Modi said, "Government has no business being in business," did he mean it? If he did, what does he have to show for it 15 months later? Minimum Government means less bureaucracy. Except for some procedural changes I don't see much evidence of any substantial change here either. I still believe he is the only one in Indian politics who can convert these catchy slogans into reality. To enable this, he has to show the same audacity in his governance as he did in his campaigning.


 (Aroon Purie)

RELIGION
RADHE MAA

48 | **Radha on the Trance Floor**

Is she a godwoman, a baby doll, a simple housewife, a scheming fraud or a power-hungry psycho? As allegations mount, Radhe Maa keeps all guessing.

PROFILE
NAWAZUDDIN SIDDIQUI

52 | **Mean Street Star**

Fifteen-plus years into a career marked by searing portrayals and unalloyed dedication to his craft, Nawazuddin Siddiqui comes into his own as Bollywood's hero next door.



6 UPFRONT

7 GLASS HOUSE

60 GLOSSARY

62 EYECATCHERS

Cover by **ROHIT CHAWLA**
DIGITAL IMAGING BY **AMARJEET SINGH NAGI**

COVER STORY
MOOD OF THE NATION

12 | **For Team Modi, Now or Never**

The big message for Narendra Modi is that his government needs to deliver, not just on signature schemes but also economic growth and employment.

CONTROVERSY
LALIT MODI

36 | **Why Lalit Modi Is Still on the Front Foot**

Even as investigators close in with warrants and notices, the former IPL boss knows that securing his extradition from Britain will not be easy.

NATION
OROP

26 | **Modi to Walk OROP Talk**

After a nasty impasse between the defence and finance ministry and the ugly spectacle of veterans on hunger strike, the One Rank, One Pension issue is now back in the PM's court.



EMERGING UNIVERSITIES
40 | **Future-ready Universities**

Shorn of the shackles of government-aided institutions, privately run universities are steadily stealing a march over them.



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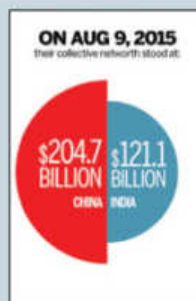
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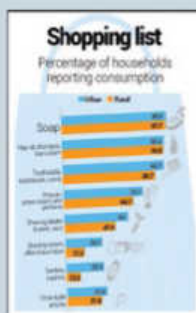
Currency crisis The sudden devaluation of yuan has hit Indian billionaires more than their Chinese counterparts. <http://bit.ly/1MxKpJT>



Being too generous or luring voters? Achche din for Bihar as Narendra Modi and Nitish Kumar shower sops ahead of the assembly polls. <http://bit.ly/1LkASOB>



Healthy, wealthy and wise Between personal hygiene and beauty products, Indians show they are more concerned about health. <http://bit.ly/1E34Gwo>



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| List of books written by late former president APJ Abdul Kalam | 1,162 |
| PM Narendra Modi takes selfie at Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, Abu Dhabi | 1,053 |



MOST LIKED ON FACEBOOK

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| Day 1: Red carpet welcome for Modi in UAE | 33,731 |
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| PM Narendra Modi takes selfie at Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, Abu Dhabi | 21,399 |



MOST RETWEETED & FAVOURITED

| | |
|---|-----|
| I-Day: Arvind Kejriwal takes it quite literally | 138 |
| A salute to the man who designed the Tricolour: Pingali Venkayya | 119 |
| Modi's 'chhutti kar doonga' moment: 'Will get rid of terrorism like this' | 106 |



MOST READ ONLINE STORIES

| | |
|---|---------|
| IndiaToday.in website home page | 326,244 |
| After Bajrangi Bhaijaan, Akshay's film is the second highest opener | 127,668 |
| 10 big quotes from Modi's Independence Day speech | 48,864 |

Asaram's Murky Rs 10,000 Crore Empire

AUGUST 17, 2015

Investigators unearth dubious land deals and a massive money-lending racket run by the godman and his associates



“People like Asaram desecrate the sanctity of titles—*sadhu, maa, bapu*—bestowed upon them. They deserve harshest punishment possible.”

KRISHAN KALRA, *via email*

Saint or Sinner?

India will always remain a happy hunting ground for Asaram Bapu and company (Asaram's Empire of Deceit, August 17). The likes of him can always fall back on political patronage and our tardy justice system to escape the long arm of the law. Add to that the gullibility of our masses, and self-proclaimed saints such as Asaram will flourish against all odds.

AVINASH GODBOLEY, *Dewas*

Asaram Bapu's success shows how deep superstitions run in our country. Our flawed education system is to blame. How else do you explain the presence of Asaram Bapu as a saint with a list of other personalities such as Swami Vivekananda and Mother Teresa in a moral science textbook for Class III students in Jodhpur schools.

PADMINI RAGHAVENDRA,
Secunderabad

I think it's wrong to direct anger at self-styled god-



India's Concerns Remain

With General Raheel Sharif taking over policy decisions, mainly foreign affairs, after the continuing success of Operation Zarb-e-Azb, it will be very difficult for India to strike any deal with Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif unless the latter has solid backing from his Army chief (General's Bloodless Coup, August 17). While it is

heartening to hear that the Pakistan Army will not torpedo attempts to buy peace, it is not clear if the terms of peace will be maintained only until the time Operation Zarb-e-Azb continues. The article could have highlighted the general's stance on terror outfits such as Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammad and their anti-India activities.

AKSHAY VISWANATHAN, *Thiruvananthapuram*

men such as Asaram Bapu when those at fault are the people who blindly follow them with the hope that these godmen can help them get rid of all their problems. They should know that godmen only take advantage of gullible *bhakt*s and exploit their emotions.

HENA PRASUN, *Ahmedabad*

Given the growing number of self-styled godmen getting mired in alleged illegal economic activities, the government should make it mandatory to scrutinise their source of funds and books of account. The ashrams should be told to accept donations above a certain amount only through cheque.

K.R. NAMBIAR, *Navi Mumbai*

Cheers and Jeers

Rahul Gandhi's emergence as a strong leader is good news for the country. A strong leader of opposition is necessary for a robust democracy. The BJP's rule has so far been uninspiring and its strategy of pushing



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ASARAM'S EMPIRE
OF DECEIT

The disciples of self-styled godman Asaram, who allegedly accumulated wealth through illegal means, should disown him.

Sanjiv Gupta

RAHUL LEARNS THE LONG ROPES

The Congress is not short of talent. They need to look beyond Rahul Gandhi.
V.K.

There is no point in pinning hope on Rahul. He is perhaps the only leader who at the age of 40 has achieved nothing.

Ramesh

CLEARING THE OROP LOGJAM

The commitment made to the ex-servicemen must be fulfilled.

K.R. Jayarama

If our PM can promise packages worth crores of rupees to Bihar and Bangladesh, why can't he find the money for OROP.

PCC Nambiar

every bill through ordinance, muzzling the voices of dissent, needs to be countered by a strong leader who can unite the opposition.

INDU SHANKAR, *Varanasi*

Rahul Gandhi is slowly coming into his own as a political leader. The reluctance in his demeanour has now been replaced by an earnestness to bring the Congress back on track. His willingness to learn and reach out to senior party leaders as well as workers in the grassroots is a healthy sign for the party.

ANAND S. MALHOTRA, *Delhi*

After a 56-day sabbatical, Rahul Gandhi has become extremely vocal but he must realise that India has moved beyond rhetoric. His body language lacks depth and sincerity. He appears more like a young student than a mature statesman. The politics of opposition, within Parliament and outside it, must be constructive or else the Gandhi scion will rapidly lose the little public sympathy left for him.

BHARAT TRIVEDI, *Ahmedabad*

The article on Rahul Gandhi doesn't tell the readers clearly about the road map ahead or steps the Congress vice president should take to revitalise the party cadre which seems to be limping towards elusive electoral triumphs.

ise the party cadre which seems to be limping towards elusive electoral triumphs.

PIYUSH SINHA, *Hyderabad*

A Punishment Well-Deserved

When the speaker has gone by the rule book and suspended 25 Congress MPs for five days for wilfully obstructing the House, Sonia Gandhi terming it as "black day for democracy" belies logic (Bipartisan Brinkmanship, August 17). The tit-for-tat strategy adopted by the Congress to stall Parliament will not win it admirers. Rather by allowing the House to run smoothly, the Congress can prove that it is a mark above other parties in conduct.

K.R. SRINIVASAN, *Secunderabad*

Parliament had been a witness to scenes of chaos in the past too, but suspension of 25 MPs was unheard of. The women's reservation bill saw dramatic protests but the members were not suspended. But then, the Congress MPs had it coming. Behaving worse than street urchins, they held the House to ransom from the day it opened for the Monsoon session. Their suspension was belated but absolutely necessary.

K.S. JAYATHEERTHA, *Bengaluru*



Honour Thy Word

The inability to deliver on the one rank, one pension (OROP) promise has started taking the sheen off the carefully-constructed image of Narendra Modi as a leader who stays true to his word (Clearing the OROP Logjam, August 17). The ex-servicemen had pinned high hopes on Modi to see their decades-long wait end. Modi is now learning the hard way that converting election promises into reality is a different ball game. The OROP is not just about money, but about the "debt" the Union government must honour and pay to war veterans.

M.M. GURBAXANI, *Bengaluru*

The article lucidly presents all the details on the OROP scheme and the roadblocks it is facing. OROP is a perfect example of how political will gets swamped by the secretariat culture, thus delaying the implementation of a long-pending demand of the armed forces. Despite making a budgetary allocation for the scheme, the finance minister's flip-flop on OROP is unfathomable.

S.S. RAMACHANDRAN, *via email*

Winning Formula

On a February morning, hundreds of college teachers, under the banner of the Bihar Buddhijivi Mitra Mandal (Bihar Intellectuals' Friends' Circle), from across the state, trooped into the Patna residence of Ranjan Yadav, the chairman of the Janata Dal Parliamentary Board.

A week later, they returned clutching files, handed them to Yadav and left again. This time, Yadav, Lalu Prasad Yadav's one-man think tank, set up a core group of Janata Dal workers to examine the



LALU EMBRACES NTR AT HIS SWEARING-IN

files. Each file had a detailed assessment of the party's prospects in each constituency in the state and a list of recommendations. All the recommendations were followed up by action. Repeated surveys were conducted and even before the vote was cast, Yadav had prepared the tally: "165, give or take 10".

While Yadav's men laid the groundwork for the Janata Dal's victory, Lalu went straight to his Muslim, Dalit and OBC voters. With the Muslims constituting 15 per cent of the population, the Dalits 14 and the Yadavs 11, among the OBCs, Lalu tapped into 40 per cent of the state's vote-bank by holding a series of rallies across the state. Prominent among them were the Sadbhavana Rally in 1993, and a year later, the Gharib Rally.

by Raj Kamal Jha
and Farzand Ahmed

April 30, 1995



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FEARS OVER YUAN EXAGGERATED

The phrases being used—push towards export-led model, beginning of currency war—to describe what has been a fairly small correction in the exchange rate of the yuan, seem quite exaggerated. Clearly, the Chinese authorities have shown an attempt to allow the yuan to fall (by not intervening despite massive reserves) as the stock market fall resulted in net forex outflows. The decision not to intervene is being interpreted as the authorities' efforts to stem the slowdown in the economy and an opportunistic demonstration of the commitment to allow a "market determined rate", presumably to get the status of a reserve currency and get included in the special drawing rights (SDR).

From India's perspective, we have to examine the impact on both the trade account and on capital flows by way of foreign institutional investors (FIIs) and foreign direct investment (FDI). The REER (real effective exchange rate) is a useful measure to understand the impact on the trade sector. The REER is a summary indicator of movements in the exchange rate of the home currency against a basket of currencies of trade partner countries, adjusted for inflation—usually consumer price index (CPI)—in the home countries. It is an indicator of price competitiveness and the purchasing power of the currency. A higher REER indicates overvaluation and loss of competitiveness while a lower REER shows undervaluation.

The Bank for International Settlements (BIS) publishes REER indices for all major countries (*see table*). An extract of these for 1995, 2005 and 2015 for select countries is in the table, which shows that from being a highly undervalued currency even in 2005, the yuan is today overvalued. On the other hand, it shows the Indian currency as undervalued as well, when in fact the latest REER published by the RBI shows overvaluation of 25 per cent. The reason is that for all other countries, the index is based on CPI, whereas for India, it is based on wholesale price index (WPI). Hence, it would be better to go by the RBI figures for India.

Thus it would appear that both the yuan and the rupee are overvalued currencies and the fall seen can be considered a small correction. In no way can the Chinese action be described as a beggar-thy-neighbour policy or a move towards an export-driven model. What

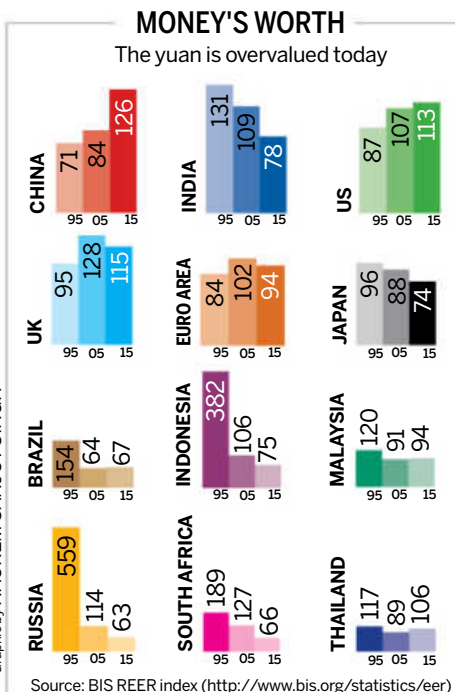
has set off the reaction is that it was so unexpected and has triggered worries of global recession on account of the impact of a significant slowing down of the Chinese economy. On the other hand, if it is the case that the Chinese did not want to intervene as FIIs exited the stock market, the impact could be merely short-term. Hence, the question on top of everyone's mind is: what is the real extent of the slowdown in China and how much worse can it get? Even a small slowdown would have a huge impact on the global demand and lead to global recession. Thus, much depends on how the Chinese continue to act and the response of other countries which are close competitors of China.

What could be the impact on India? Taking into account the recent improvement in the macro-economic indicators for India and the growth rate potential, there is every reason to believe that the country could attract more—both FDI and FIIs. Correction in the REER would help competitiveness and exports. Also, we have always been a domestic market-oriented economy and this stands us in good stead. Those having large dollar liabilities would have presumably hedged themselves, but there could be a challenge for those who have remained largely unhedged. Overall, the impact could be positive for India but much would depend on how the global markets are viewing this event and what their responses are.

So, what should India do? We should not try to defend the rupee that is already quite overvalued, but only smoothen extreme volatility as is the stated policy. We should keep a tight grip on inflation, as it is on account of inflation that the rupee has become overvalued. Banks should be careful in increasing their exposure to borrowers with large unhedged forex liabilities and lay down suitable covenants. Where already exposed, banks will have to take proactive steps to protect against possible impact fall in the currency. We should focus on the real sector issues which attract FDI and domestic capital expenditure and improve the investment climate and act quickly on stalled projects, Goods and Service Tax (GST), subsidies, land acquisition etc.

Usha Thorat is former deputy governor of the Reserve Bank of India

Graphic by NAOREM SANJOY SINGH



RETURN OF THE PATRIARCH

The BJP's Margdarshak Mandal (guidance committee), which includes L.K. Advani, is largely a ceremonial body but the veteran leader is still leading the way. On the last day of Parliament's monsoon session, the NDA organised a "Save Democracy March" from Vijay Chowk to Mahatma Gandhi's statue in Parliament complex. NDA ministers hopped into their AC cars to drive down to Vijay Chowk, which is less than 500 metres away. However, they were utterly embarrassed after seeing the 87-year-old Advani trudging in the heat towards Vijay Chowk. Arun Jaitley, Piyush Goyal, Smriti Irani and several other ministers hurriedly got off their vehicles and joined Advani. With party dissidents such as Shanta Kumar and Shatrughan Sinha and MP Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan making a beeline to meet him over the past few days, it seems Advani is quietly making a comeback as party mentor.



Illustration by SAURABH SINGH



NOW, HOST IN INDIA

PM Narendra Modi, facing criticism at home for not being able to deliver enough, is doing a better follow-up on his foreign commitments. He is hosting leaders from 14 Pacific island nations in Jaipur on August 21. Modi had first mooted the idea of a Forum for India-Pacific Island Cooperation during his visit to Fiji 10 months ago. What has attracted so many heads of state is the prospect of deeper business and defence ties to balance China's influence in the region.



REHASH AND RULE

The Modi government is all set to 'repackage' another UPA-era initiative. The Right to Education (RTE) Act, passed by the UPA in 2009, made education a fundamental right of every child between 6 and 14 years of age studying from Classes I to VIII. Smriti Irani's HRD ministry now wants to extend the RTE up to Class X. The Central Advisory Board on Education (CABE) had recommended extension of RTE to secondary stages of education in 2011. The government is likely to launch a revised RTE with a substantial increase in the education budget.

OLD GUARD VS YOUNG TURKS



The recently concluded monsoon session is said to have sparked resentment within the Congress's old guard who wanted the resignation of Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj, Madhya Pradesh CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Rajasthan CM Vasundhara Raje before any debate in the House. Insiders say it was a last-minute strategy shift by Rahul Gandhi's youth brigade—**Jyotiraditya Scindia**, **Deepender Hooda**, **Gaurav Gogoi**—to agree to a debate on the last day. A veteran Congress leader feels the party lost the war when it pushed for a discussion. The Congress is miffed at Swaraj's revelations of the obscure story of Adil Shahryar, whose jail sentence in the US was waived by Ronald Reagan in 1985, now becoming part of the discussion record in the Lok Sabha.

THE SPEED-BREAKER

Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar may have cleared several pending projects, but they are yet to get past his Defence Secretary **G. Mohan Kumar**. A popular joke doing the rounds in defence firms these days is that Kumar's desk is the Ministry of Defence's speed breaker. Half-a-dozen proposals for buying heavy lift helicopters, gunships, missiles and airborne tankers are yet to get his approval before being sent to the Cabinet Committee on Security. Bureaucrats in the ministry are unmoved. No decisions mean fewer controversies.



ROLE MODEL



Congress President **Sonia Gandhi** invoked an unusual Congress party icon to motivate her party MPs, who held up Parliament proceedings during the just-concluded monsoon session. She told them of the fiery antics of her brother-in-law Sanjay Gandhi who kept the Janata Party government on its toes. Helping the Congress president to manage her strategy was Kamal Nath, one of Sanjay's trusted lieutenants in the 1970s.

HOLDING FORT

Prime Minister Modi's speech at the Red Fort on August 15 is the longest in recent times



PM Narendra Modi's speech

hour mins



2015



2014



PM Manmohan Singh's speech



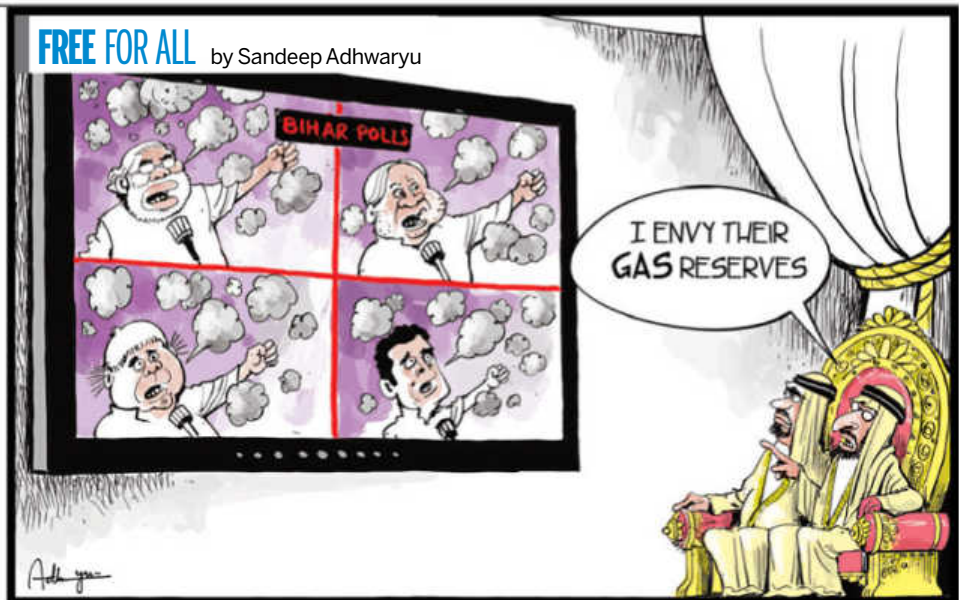
2013



2012

BITING THE BULLET

Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah has unleashed his charm offensive on the media in Bengaluru in the recent past. Earlier, the media-shy CM would walk away from microphones. His usually-curt responses to queries are now replaced with eloquent answers and indulgent smiles. There is strong speculation in the Congress that Siddaramaiah may be replaced by Mallikarjun Kharge as the CM. That possibly explains his media outreach.



FILLING IN THE BLANKS

Prime Minister Modi has had to skip his last three visits to Varanasi owing to bad weather. He has now assigned two ministers of state to regularly sit in the 'mini-PMO' (the popular name for Modi's constituency office) in Varanasi.

Minister of State for Tourism

Mahesh Sharma will be available in the mini-PMO every first Saturday of the month while Minister of State for Railways

Manoj Sinha will listen to public grievances every third Saturday.



CAPTAIN'S FLIP-FLOPS

Former Punjab CM Captain Amarinder Singh is deeply unhappy with the party high command for not replacing the state party chief, Partap Singh Bajwa. This is one reason why he skipped the monsoon session of the Lok Sabha. Singh also publicly disagreed with his party for not cooperating in the introduction of the Goods and Service Tax (GST) bill. But he later clarified he had no differences with the party high command. "I'm not a dummy. I have the right to have my say."

HAPPY ENDINGS

The Kerala government and Gautam Adani's APSEZ signed an agreement on the Vizhinjam seaport in Thiruvananthapuram on August 17. The opposition Left boycotted the event. Also missing was MP **Shashi Tharoor**, who has been a big advocate of the project. Personal interest clashed with the political for him. He was in New York for son **Kanishk's** wedding to **Amanda Calderon**. Tharoor, who tweeted about the groom setting out to "lose his independence on Independence Day", was sad to have missed the Vizhinjam signing but said "the role I have played is well known". Kerala Congressmen, who have never taken kindly to "outsider" Tharoor, would certainly not have missed him.



with SANTOSH KUMAR, ANSHUMAN TIWARI, CHARMY HARIKRISHNAN, ROHIT PARIHAR, KAUSHIK DEKA, ARAVIND GOWDA AND MANJEET SEHGAL



DUMPING IS BACK!

Close to 90 per cent of the world's e-waste, worth nearly \$19 billion, is illegally traded or dumped each year, and India is among the main destinations

Most of the
40
million tonnes

of global e-waste
finds its way illegally to
Asia and Africa every year

That's
90%
of the global e-waste,
worth
\$19
billion

Primary origins of e-waste shipments



Primary destinations



What's driving the illegal trade?

Low cost
of shipment

High cost
of treatment

for developed countries

Exporting e-waste to Asia works out
10 times cheaper
than processing it within the country

All this 'dumping' can be hazardous

Hazardous substances in a single mobile phone

MOBILE PHONE BATTERY

| | | |
|---------------|---------------|----------------------------|
| Li Lithium | Co Cobalt | Ni Nickel |
| F Fluorine | Cd Cadmium | KOH Potassium Hydroxide |

PHONE COVER CASE & FRAME

| | | |
|-----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Mg Magnesium | Ti Titanium | Cr Chromium |
| Sb Antimony | | |

ELECTRONIC SYSTEMS IN MOBILES

| | | | |
|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| As Arsenic | Sn Tin | Ba Barium | Br Bromine |
| Be Beryllium | S Sulphur | Zr Zirconium | Mn Manganese |
| Zn Zinc | Pb Lead | Y Yttrium | |

And it's not just e-waste...



India was home to

1 out of every 4

ships broken worldwide
in Jan-Apr 2015



as well as...



Tyres



Metals



End-of-life
vehicles



Textiles



Auto parts

The fact, therefore, is that
India is not only the world's
5th largest
generator of
e-waste

We are also a
leading importer!



Source: UNEP—Waste Crimes, Waste Risks: Gaps and Challenges In the Waste Sector

SPEAKING TRUTH TO THE GREAT ORATOR

Modi is by far India's most powerful, domineering, instinctive—and very popular—political figure. Why then is his government floundering?

There can't be much doubt now that Narendra Modi is our most powerful political figure after Indira Gandhi. But if you qualify your search, you could argue that he is our most domineering, instinctive leader. Instinctive leadership, as defined in the context of Thatcher, was, I follow my conviction, I don't bother for consensus.

That out of the way, Modi is also our most powerful public speaker and communicator. You can complain about his not speaking in Parliament very much, or taking direct questions, but he is hyper-communicative in an environment that he can control fully. Once he can define his audience and put it in a controlled setting, he is a master of the set-piece as we haven't before seen in India. Vajpayee was a great orator, but an occasional one. Even he did not use the big stage to sell his ideas, or even ideology.

Over the past week, Modi has given us two confirmations of these qualities: in his Independence Day address and his speech to the NRI community in Dubai. His speech from Delhi's Red Fort was deliberately understated. More like a long-distance rider settling into cruise control. There weren't any new ideas now, which was probably deliberate because the ones put forward earlier have seen indifferent progress, particularly toilets, Swachh Bharat, Make in India. But the fact that he did not make any quick announcement under pressure on the OROP issue showed a sharp mind.

Strong leaders do not make policy responses to incidents. And instinctive leaders do not do what everybody expects them to do. Instead, they surprise. By not talking on OROP in any terms other than general platitudes, Modi surprised most of all the media, particularly television channels which had stationed TV crews at Jantar Mantar. Powerful, instinctive leaders also do not allow others to steal their limelight from the big stage. If Modi had indeed made a specific, dramatic announcement on OROP, even if it had fully pleased

the veterans, it would have made Independence Day their event rather than his. In any case, why reduce his big stage to a grievance redressal platform.

Similarly, in Dubai, conscious of the fact that it was his first visit to an Islamic country, with which India has had a patchy relationship—Dubai has been the traditional haven for Indian tax evaders, smuggling syndicates and, is, more importantly, Dawood Ibrahim's *karmabhoomi*—he delivered the message he needed to, with panache and dignified firmness.

No complaints about Pakistani support to terror, no appeals to their patrons, the UAE Sheikhs, to lean on them to mend their ways, but just a subtle message: South Asia is also integrating like Europe, on the east everybody is coming together, and if to the west the Pakistanis continue blocking, India will leapfrog them and reach out to the UAE and complete the loop. So join it, or risk being left out. At the same time, he did not curse Pakistan even while firing continued on the border. You can see he is setting a new agenda. He wants talks with Pakistan to resume and would not let anybody, friend or political foe, to disrupt or even finesse it.

Play the tapes of his Dubai address again. Note the number of times he gets the crowd to shout slogans in praise of the "Crown Prince". Now think. Is it usual for an Indian prime minister to rouse a crowd of Indians, even those living and working in a foreign land, to shout slogans in praise of the ruler there? It is also no coincidence that it was a largely Hindu audience praising the royalty of an Islamic kingdom. Never mind that Doordarshan cameras and Modi's image managers ruined it by bunching traditionally dressed Bohra Muslims together in one area and repeatedly panning on them.

In my recollection, there are two similar events where an Indian leader used Indian crowds to flatter a

“
YOU WANT TO SEE HOW A STRONG, CONFIDENT LEADER AND A GREAT COMMUNICATOR USES THE BIG STAGE, PLAY THE TAPES OF HIS DUBAI ADDRESS AGAIN. NOTE THE NUMBER OF TIMES HE GETS THE CROWD TO SHOUT SLOGANS IN PRAISE OF THE 'CROWN PRINCE'. IS IT USUAL FOR AN INDIAN PM TO ROUSE A CROWD OF INDIANS, EVEN THOSE LIVING AND WORKING IN A FOREIGN LAND, TO SHOUT SLOGANS IN PRAISE OF THE RULER THERE?”

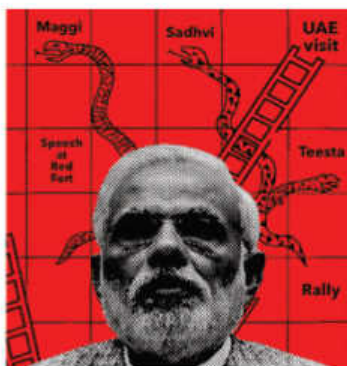


foreign strongman like this. The first, when Nehru took Khrushchev and Bulganin to Ramlila Maidan in 1955. And the second, when Narasimha Rao had Rafsanjani address a massive congregation at the Imambara in Lucknow in 1995, when the Babri wound was still raw. Yet there is a difference. The Khrushchev visit was at the peak of Nehru's socialist phase, so there was an ideological affinity. And crowds cheering Rafsanjani were all Muslim, or rather Shias, although what he said to them ranks, in my book, as one of the shrewdest diplomatic successes in our history: Indian Muslims are safe in the Indian system of secularism. That by itself underlines and justifies India's very special relationship with Iran, in spite of the sanctions, Pakistan and occasional irritants.

Modi's critics complained that he had not visited an Islamic country. Muslim-majority countries, Bangladesh, the Central Asian Republics, yes. But not a truly Islamic country. He was making up for that now, but not simply by sticking another pin on the map of the world of his travels. But by making a strategic beginning, and if he could, as India's most unapologetically Hindu prime minister, have 50,000 of his mostly Hindu fans cheer a hereditary Muslim ruler in a foreign land, it speaks for his instinct, power and skill.

With all these wonderful attributes in place, why does his government's performance still seem to be patchy, if not floundering? Why are his biggest and also non-controversial ideas, from cleaning the Ganga to Swachh Bharat to Make in India, drifting? Why is economic growth not recovering, particularly if you discount the statistical creativity that mythically bumped up the figure by changing some norms? Why does a specific, sharp and prime ministerial decision, such as the purchase of just about two squadrons of Rafale fighters, get stuck in follow-up negotiations and formalities?

Why does he let nutcases, from Giriraj Singh to Sakshi Maharaj to Gajendra Chauhan, steal his headlines? How does he make a strategic blunder like trying to bring a new land acquisition law through an overnight ordinance? Why does his government look like it has declared war on the news media, with formal notices to news channels on Yakub Memon coverage (even if some of it was silly),



“
COULD IT BE THAT WHILE MODI HAS ALL THESE GREAT QUALITIES, HE ALSO SHARES A WEAKNESS WITH MANY OTHER LEADERS WHO, DESPITE BEING GREATLY ENDOWED WITH TALENT, DENY THEMSELVES REAL GREATNESS: THE INABILITY OR DISINCLINATION TO ATTRACT, WELCOME TALENT WHEREVER THEY CAN FIND THEM? OR BRING INTO THEIR SYSTEM SMART PEOPLE WITH INTEGRITY, AND SPINE, TO SPEAK TRUTH TO POWER INTERNALLY.”

his home ministry invoking “national security” to withdraw the Sun group's media licences, and his CBI turning Teesta Setalvad into a “national security threat” as if she were some malevolent cousin Dawood Ibrahim had left behind? All these are fights he and his government will lose in substance even if they succeed in sending somebody they don't like to jail for a few days or forcing some media outlet to stop publishing briefly.

Smart, instinctive, powerful, confident leaders, who are also great communicators, do not fritter away their energies and goodwill in issues as petty as these.

Could it be that while he has all these great qualities, he also shares a weakness with many other leaders who deny themselves real greatness: the inability, disinclination or lack of humility to attract, welcome talent wherever they can find them, even if it is outside of their immediate circle of political or ideological comfort? Or bring into their system smart people with spine, to speak truth to power internally. Somebody who would have told him, for example, that that suit, though sharp, was a bad idea.

Or that while the situation in Parliament this monsoon session was irritating, it would have been better if as leader of the Lok Sabha, he had made a statement, suo motu, on issues the opposition was raising.

It would not have convinced them, but he denied himself the opportunity to exercise his moral authority as prime minister. Or that he should caution his home and information ministries to not open fronts in areas such as media freedom where his government and party are, rightly or wrongly, seen as usual suspects. And there should have been somebody in the system to keep nagging him to tell Ram Vilas Pawan to take a chill pill rather than file that ludicrous class action suit against Nestle on Maggi. You are a powerful sovereign government, you regulate Nestle according to your Republic's food safety laws, you own laboratories, so test everything and, if you can establish anything wrong or criminal, prosecute. But class action suit? That is no statement of strength, but only of stupidity.

You can say a prime minister is much too busy, has many more important things to address than these. But then why let your government be hobbled by these? It's an interesting idea to be a majestic one-man cavalry, but you can't win wars without building real armies to follow you.

Follow the writer on Twitter @ShekharGupta

FOR TEAM MODI, NOW OR NEVER

THE BIG MESSAGE FOR NARENDRA MODI IS THAT HIS GOVERNMENT NEEDS TO DELIVER ON ECONOMIC GROWTH AND JOBS APART FROM TACKLING CORRUPTION AND BUREAUCRACY

How do you rate the performance of Narendra Modi as prime minister?

17

22

Excellent

40

38

Good

28

26

Average

13

11

Poor



NOW



APRIL 2015

Rest: Don't know/
can't say
All figures in %

By Raj Chengappa

In democracy, the difference between making history and becoming history is the thin dividing line of performance. As he completes a quarter of his term as prime minister, Narendra Modi should be more than mindful and watch his step.

Ostensibly, there is nothing to indicate that the ground is beginning to slip under his feet. He is as much out there and in your face as he was when he assumed power in May last year. His oratorical skill remains impressive. His passionate 90-minute extempore Independence Day speech was vintage Modi although he could be faulted for being defensive and self-congratulatory at times. He continues to wow NRIs as he did in Dubai to a stadium packed to capacity and chants of, "Modi, Modi, Modi". He followed it up with two gruelling rallies in poll-bound Bihar where the outcome clearly rests on his

VOTE PROJECTION

A YEAR ON, THE MODI GOVERNMENT'S POPULARITY TAKES A HIT

| | MOTN AUGUST 2015 | MOTN APRIL 2015 | LS 2014 | SWING FROM LS |
|--------|---------------------|--------------------|------------|------------------|
| NDA | 37 | 39 | 38.4 | -1.4 ▼ |
| BJP | 31 | 32 | 31 | - |
| UPA | 24 | 23 | 21.7 | 2.3 ▲ |
| INC | 21 | 20 | 19.3 | 1.7 ▲ |
| OTHERS | 39 | 38 | 31 | 8.0 ▲ |

All figures in %



What does Narendra Modi represent?

| | | |
|----------------------|----|----|
| DEVELOPMENT | 41 | 40 |
| HINDU NATIONALISM | 16 | 16 |
| GOOD GOVERNANCE | 14 | 12 |
| COMMUNAL INTOLERANCE | 13 | 18 |
| INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP | 8 | 6 |

● NOW Rest: Don't know/can't say
● APRIL 2015 All figures in %

39% PEOPLE FEEL PM MODI IS HARDWORKING

How does PM Modi run the government?

| | | |
|--------------------------|----|----|
| WORKS ON HIS OWN TERMS | 28 | 39 |
| IS CONTROLLED BY THE RSS | 39 | 36 |
| STRIKES A BALANCE | 21 | 15 |

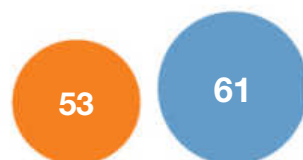
● NOW Rest: No opinion
● APRIL 2015 All figures in %

SEAT FORECAST

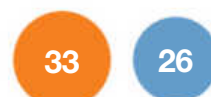
CONGRESS SLOWLY GAINING CONFIDENCE; BJP LOSING GROUND

| | MOTN AUGUST 2015 | MOTN APRIL 2015 | LS 2014 | GAIN/LOSS FROM LS |
|--------|---------------------|--------------------|------------|----------------------|
| NDA | 288 | 299 | 335 | -47 ▼ |
| BJP | 243 | 255 | 282 | -39 ▼ |
| UPA | 81 | 71 | 59 | 22 ▲ |
| INC | 62 | 53 | 44 | 18 ▲ |
| OTHERS | 174 | 173 | 149 | 25 ▲ |

Do you feel safe under Modi government?



Feel safe



Feel unsafe

● NOW Rest: Don't know/
● APRIL 2015 can't say
All figures in %

broad chest and eloquence.

There is little doubt that Modi, the man, appears inexhaustible. Even in the India Today Group-Cicero Mood of the Nation Poll, Team India—as Modi refers to the country's billion plus populace—still regards him highly.

Close to 57 per cent of those surveyed rated his performance as good to excellent—a dip of only three per cent compared to a similar poll done in April. He remains the nation's top choice for Prime Minister with 37 per cent still rooting for him. Arvind Kejriwal remains a distant second at 11 per cent followed by Rahul Gandhi with 8 per cent. The poll also shows that many remain sceptical of Rahul Gandhi's ability to revive the Congress. The good news for Modi is that there is no challenge to his leadership either from without or within.

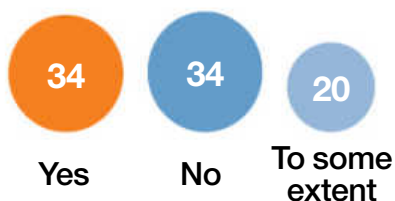
What should worry him though

is that Team India is showing signs of losing confidence in Team Modi's ability to deliver. For the second consecutive Mood of the Nation Poll, the BJP-led NDA government's popularity has seen a noticeable drop. The poll shows that Modi's historic majority of 282 in the Lok Sabha—the first time in 30 years that a party had been voted to power with a clear majority in India—is steadily being trimmed. If elections were held now the BJP would be down to 243 seats as compared to 255 in April making the ruling party increasingly dependent on its NDA allies. Overall the NDA's strength, according to the poll, has dropped from a healthy 335 seats to 288 seats—just 16 seats more than a simple majority. The current poll also shows that a sizeable 54 per cent continue to rate the BJP-led central government's performance between average and poor.

Both the UPA 1 and UPA 2 governments did not show such a significant fall in their popularity ratings in the Mood of the Nation polls conducted when they had completed one-fourth of their terms. The Congress-led UPA 1 held on to its seat share in the August 2005 poll and in the August 2010 poll, the UPA 2 seats dropped only marginally. Modi though enjoys a higher personal popularity rating than Manmohan Singh in the polls—understandable given that Sonia Gandhi was the powerhouse of the UPA.

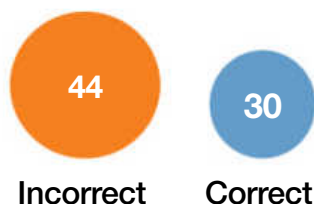
So why does Team Modi appear to be losing its gloss within just 15 months of being in power? The survey is emphatic: inability to curb corruption and bring back black money are listed as two of the Modi government's biggest failures. Whatever be the Prime Minister's defence, the people are angry that his government just

Have Modi's ministers dented his image?



Rest: Don't know/can't say
All figures in %

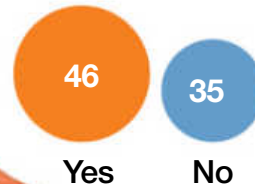
Do you think the decision of BJP leaders Sushma Swaraj and Vasundhara Raje to help former IPL chairman Lalit Modi was correct?



Rest: Don't know/can't say
All figures in %

Do you think these BJP leaders should have resigned over the scandals?

SUSHMA SWARAJ



35% FEEL PRIME MINISTER MODI'S BIGGEST ACHIEVEMENT HAS BEEN IMPROVING INDIA'S IMAGE ABROAD



PTI

hasn't done enough to deliver on his promise of "Na khaoonga, na khane doonga" (Neither will I take a bribe, nor will I let others take bribes). A majority of those surveyed want External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and Rajasthan Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje to resign over charges of aiding Lalit Modi and Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan for his handling of the Vyapam scam.

As important is the perception that for all the tall talk, the NDA government hasn't been able to turn the economy around. The percentage of doubters—those who believe that the economy is likely to remain the same in the next six months—has doubled from 23 in April to 47 now. A similar poll held in September last year showed that 65 per cent believed

that Team Modi would be able to turn the economy around. Now the believers have dropped to just 17 per cent.

On the land bill, a majority of those surveyed felt that the changes being made by the Modi government were anti-farmer although many thought it was necessary for development. Little wonder then that Modi watered down the changes much to the disappointment of industry. But on Modi's signature projects, such as Jan-Dhan Yojana that provides financial inclusion for the poor and Swachh Bharat to clean up India, there is praise. Nor do people complain about his frequent foreign jaunts. On the contrary they believe that it has helped raise India's image abroad. Overall, they credit Modi with being hard-focused on development although many believe he is controlled by the RSS.

Those close to the Prime Minister

vouch that he works harder than all of them maintaining a punishing pace. The survey validates that impression. To his credit, Modi constantly monitors all the programmes that he has launched and is ever willing to present a progress report to the nation. He continues to consult a range of advisers and even the public as he did with his Independence Day speech when he got them to send suggestions to his social media site. And after he listens to all that is to be said, he takes the final call—the buck truly stops with him.

John F. Kennedy once said, "Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other." With still over three-and-a-half years to go, the wake-up call has come in early enough for Modi to learn fast and recover ground. The Prime Minister had confessed recently that it took him several months initially to figure out where to begin

VASUNDHARA RAJE



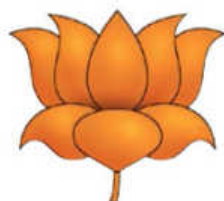
SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN



48% FEEL THE OPPOSITION IS NOT ALLOWING THE GOVERNMENT TO FUNCTION

Which party is best suited to solve the problems of the country?

| | | |
|----------|----|----|
| CONGRESS | 22 | 21 |
| BJP | 47 | 46 |
| AAP | 7 | 12 |
| NO PARTY | 11 | 9 |
| OTHERS | 7 | 8 |



● NOW

● APRIL 2015

Rest: Don't know/can't say
All figures in %

43% FEEL THE BJP IS THE MOST CONCERNED ABOUT THE POOR AND THE UNEMPLOYED

Who is best suited to become the next prime minister of India?

| | | |
|-----------------|----|----|
| NARENDRA MODI | 37 | 36 |
| ARVIND KEJRIWAL | 11 | 15 |
| RAHUL GANDHI | 8 | 7 |
| SONIA GANDHI | 5 | 5 |
| MAYAWATI | 5 | 3 |

● NOW

● APRIL 2015

Rest: Others/don't know/can't say
All figures in %



How do you rate the performance of Rahul Gandhi as the leader of the Congress?

| | |
|-------------|----|
| POOR | 20 |
| AVERAGE | 43 |
| GOOD | 25 |
| OUTSTANDING | 6 |

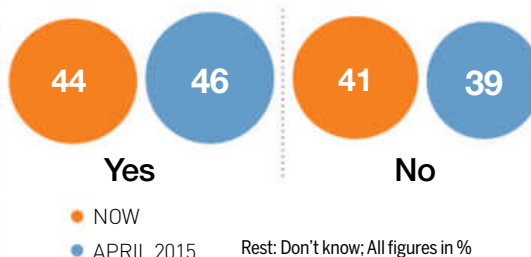
● NOW
● APRIL 2015 Rest: Don't know/can't say All figures in %

Who could be the best prime ministerial candidate from Congress?

| | | |
|-----------------|----|----|
| RAHUL GANDHI | 30 | 20 |
| SONIA GANDHI | 10 | 13 |
| PRIYANKA GANDHI | 7 | 11 |
| DIGVIJAYA SINGH | 7 | 2 |
| ANAND SHARMA | 6 | 5 |

● NOW
● APRIL 2015 Rest: Others/don't know/can't say All figures in %

Do you think Rahul Gandhi can revive the Congress?



METHODOLOGY

The India Today Group-Cicero Mood of the Nation Poll was conducted by Cicero Associates & Consultants. A total of 11,820 interviews were conducted across 526 locations in 263 assembly constituencies in 19 states—Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Delhi, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh. The field-work was conducted between July 24 and August 5. The survey followed multi-stage stratified random sample design. All interviews were conducted using a standard structured interview schedule or questionnaire which was also translated into regional languages.

29% FEEL RAHUL GANDHI SHOULD BE THE NEXT CONGRESS PRESIDENT

and to test if the central government “frequency” matched with his. Also to understand that while as Gujarat chief minister he could pretty much rule the way he pleased, as prime minister he had to take into consideration the pulls and pressures, the shades and hues and the castes and creeds of 29 states and seven Union Territories that represent a billion-plus people.

The big message from the poll is that apart from tackling corruption, Team Modi must strive much harder to boost economic growth and deliver

on providing jobs. On his major initiatives such as Make in India and Digital India, swift implementation remains the key. Luckily for him, his government has been able to keep inflation, the No. 1 concern of people, under check with international oil prices remaining low.

There continues to be dismay over his poor handling of the Opposition and the inability of the BJP to push through crucial economic reforms in Parliament apart from downsizing government. Nor has the shilly-shallying over the implementation

of the One-Rank-One-Pension demand of the armed forces gone down well. Modi must heed his mentor Swami Vivekananda’s advice about a leader having to be “accommodative of a thousand minds”. Fundamentally, it is not enough for only the Prime Minister to perform—every member of Team Modi needs to deliver. Or sooner rather than later they would become history.

Follow the writer on Twitter @rajchengappa



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Jab zindagi badalni ho

THE BIG PAUSE IN INDIA

POLITICS IS TRUMPING ECONOMICS. BUT BEYOND THE GRIM REALITY OF THE HERE AND NOW, THE LONG-TERM PROSPECTS OF MODI'S INDIA STILL LOOK GOOD.

By Y.P. Rajesh

Parliament has been paralysed. The pundits are catching their breath. India Inc is signing petitions. Investors are still waiting in the wings. The finance minister is getting trolled by the faithful. The Prime Minister's rhetoric is muted. And promise has turned into a test of patience for voters, even though the catchwords and phrases are all still riding the airwaves and buzzing in the ears: price rise, inflation, corruption, jobs, development, Make in India, smart cities, land acquisition and what have you. Has the time come to pull out some dreaded 'D' words: Drift? Disappointment?

The third Mood of the Nation Poll since the BJP-led NDA government of Narendra Modi came to power has answers, although only some. And once again it is a toss-up between reality and the perception built by restless headline hunting on both sides of the aisle. The big reality of price rise and inflation is captured in a single graph, a bunch of skyscrapers that nearly disappear into small-town structures—a halving of consumer price inflation from more than 8 per cent in May 2014 to under 4 per cent in July 2015. It was a key concern before the chief minister of Gujarat became the prime minister of India, and it remains a big threat for those working on macroeconomic forecasts.

Still, the fall is not mean by any standard and although global factors have been more at play, the tide of sentiment has been such that appropriating credit is seen as par for the course for the incumbent. But the

incumbent has to also carry the cross of perception for all that is not going in its favour, whether it is to blame or not, because such is the accompanying tide of expectation. Or just hang it on the rhetoric.

So the failure to bring back black money from foreign shores and the failure to check corruption top the list of failures of a 14-month-old government. Although the two may seem intrinsically linked in the court of public opinion, they are separate threads for a leadership bent on wearing its propriety on its sleeve and collar. A SIT has been formed to go after black money, tax hounds are on the standby as a disclosure scheme meanders along, businessmen are terrified and foreign governments are not sure

about co-operating. But the promised thousands of crores have not made it back home, leave alone lakhs being deposited in each bank account. Call it an election gimmick, which it indeed was. Admit it and watch the voters begin to froth in anger. Pay for overreach.

Corruption is a different ballgame. For the establishment it is framed in a line made immortal by the leader that he wouldn't indulge in graft or allow his establishment to do so either. In the backdrop of the scams and scandals that scalded the UPA the line has almost become a guiding philosophy of the NDA. Almost, because of the ghost of a Lalit Modi and an ongoing murky saga called Vyapam in a BJP-ruled state. But is it possible to get a driving licence from your RTO without bribing the clerk or inspector? Get your apartment registered without pushing a few big currency notes under the table? Or expect your traffic police constable to insist on an 'official fine' every time you break the law? But then, can this even become the KRA of a central government? Try explaining that to the sceptics.

But why has hope for the economy made way for drift if not pessimism? Is it because the expectation of lakhs of new jobs is still in the realm of expectation? Or the hope of big-bang reforms and good days is stuck in the din of Parliament, the bungling of the bureaucracy, scares from Greece and China, a plunging rupee and a stock market that seems like a cruise liner caught in a storm? Or because we can't even trust our food regulator to get our favourite noodles right?

How would you rate the performance of the BJP-led NDA government over the past 15 months?

| | | |
|-------------|----|----|
| POOR | 16 | 16 |
| AVERAGE | 38 | 40 |
| GOOD | 36 | 33 |
| OUTSTANDING | 6 | 8 |

● NOW

● APRIL 2015

Rest: Don't know/
can't say
All figures in %



What has been the biggest failure of the Modi government in the past one year?

| | |
|---|----|
| FAILURE TO CHECK CORRUPTION | 20 |
| FAILURE TO BRING BACK BLACK MONEY | 36 |
| FAILURE TO GIVE PROMISED EMPLOYMENT | 17 |
| FAILURE TO BRING DOWN PRICES | 15 |
| FAILURE TO CHECK RIGHT-WING FRINGE ELEMENTS | 3 |

Rest: Others/don't know/can't say
All figures in %

40% FEEL THE MODI GOVERNMENT HAS NOT SUCCEEDED IN CURBING CORRUPTION

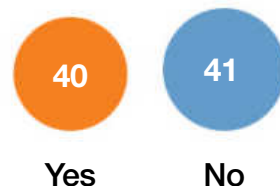
In the next six months, do you expect your economic situation to become worse, remain the same or become better?

| | | |
|----------------------|----|----|
| WILL BECOME WORSE | 30 | 41 |
| WILL REMAIN THE SAME | 47 | 23 |
| WILL BECOME BETTER | 17 | 22 |

● NOW
● APRIL 2015
Rest: Don't know/can't say
All figures in %

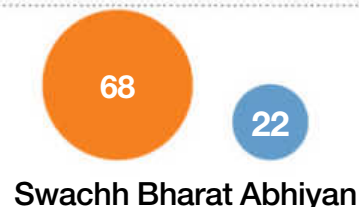
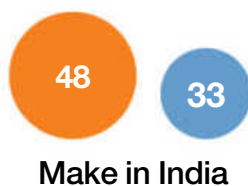
44%
PEOPLE FEEL THE MODI GOVERNMENT WILL BE ABLE TO BRING DOWN INFLATION

Do you think PM Modi has been able to put the economy back on track?



Rest: Don't know/can't say
All figures in %

Are the initiatives taken by Prime Minister Modi practical or impractical?



● PRACTICAL
● IMPRACTICAL

Rest: Don't know/can't say
All figures in %

Who do you think is the best prime ministerial candidate for the BJP other than Modi?

| | |
|-----------------------|----|
| ARUN JAITLEY | 13 |
| L.K. ADVANI | 13 |
| NITIN GADKARI | 12 |
| AMIT SHAH | 10 |
| RAJNATH SINGH | 9 |
| SUSHMA SWARAJ | 7 |
| SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN | 6 |

Rest: Others/don't know/can't say
All figures in %

40% THINK THE DELIVERY OF PUBLIC SERVICES HAS IMPROVED AFTER THE MODI GOVERNMENT CAME TO POWER

What is your opinion on the land bill?

IT'S ANTI-FARMER BUT PRO-BIG BUSINESS 28

IT'S ANTI-FARMER BUT IMPORTANT FOR DEVELOPMENT 35

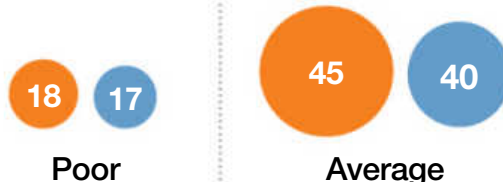
IT WILL EVENTUALLY HELP FARMERS TOO 13

Rest: Don't know/can't say
All figures in %

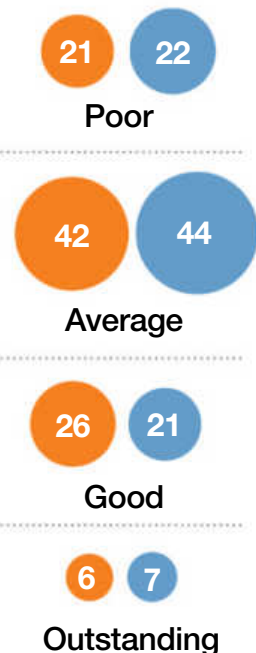
Is the troika of Narendra Modi, Amit Shah and Arun Jaitley sidelining other BJP leaders and running the country by themselves good for the country?



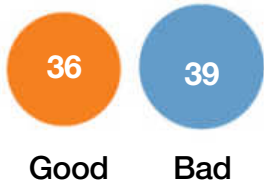
How do you rate the performance of Amit Shah as the BJP president over the past one year?



How do you rate the performance of Sonia Gandhi as the president of the Congress?

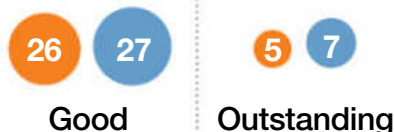


55% PEOPLE FEEL THAT THE CONGRE BETTER WITHOUT THE NEHRU-GANDHI FA



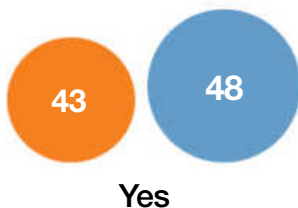
Rest: Don't know/can't say
All figures in %

PTI



● NOW
● APRIL 2015
Rest: Don't know/can't say
All figures in %

Do you think the Congress will see a revival in the next five years?



● NOW
● APRIL 2015
Rest: Don't know/can't say
All figures in %

SS CAN'T DO ANY
MILY

It is perhaps all these and more. Headlines make instant history and swing moods. Giant economies don't.

Which is why analysts who pore through the numbers and can see past the headlines have a different take, less gloomy if not altogether positive. For them the micro or the short-term sentiment is weak and slow. Politics is trumping economics, good governance and even good sense. It is a fight for survival for the defeated and a reality check for the victor when it comes to passing legislation. But the macro or the long-term story is still brewing and is one of the best in the world. The Bihar assembly election is the next big milestone for the political economy although it needs to be argued why assembly elections, even one in a large, heartland state, should be allowed to hold national policies and politics hostage.

There are other changes that have got quiet wheels. Efforts are underway to fix PSU banks and the coal mining sector, among the few sectors which the central government still has control over. Central government spending is picking up and roads construction is shifting gears. So is capital expenditure in the telecom sector. The land bill is stuck but that has not hurt projects as states are managing to get around the logjam. Falling inflation is expected to boost consumption and allow more interest rate cuts, in turn helping higher GDP growth. Record forex reserves are a great cushion against global headwinds.

Missions such as Make in India, Smart Cities, Digital India, Skill India and Start-up India are still challenges. A Foxconn here or a GM there are green shoots. But the name of the new game is execution and implementation and it is very well that the Prime Minister did not dip into his goody bag on August 15 and produce more utopian dreams. It takes just 12 months for rhetoric to meet reality on the ramparts of the Red Fort and that may not be such a rude wake-up call after all.

Follow the writer on Twitter @yprajash



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BATTING FOR CRICKET

DESPITE ALLEGATIONS AND COURT CASES, INDIA CONTINUES TO LOVE THE SPORT

Should politicians be involved in running sports associations?

23

Yes

52

No

Rest: Don't know/can't say
All figures in %

What attracts politicians and industrialists to cricket?

GENUINE INTEREST
IN PROMOTING
THE GAME

21

MONEY

47

PUBLICITY

15

Rest: Don't know/can't say
All figures in %

46% PEOPLE THINK THAT THE IPL HAS HELPED RAISE THE STANDARD OF THE INDIAN CRICKET TEAM



JAISON G

39% PEOPLE FEEL THAT INDIAN CRICKET IS IN GOOD HANDS UNDER THE BCCI

Was the IPL better under Lalit Modi?

33

Yes

36

No

Rest: Don't know/can't say
All figures in %

The sociologist Ashis Nandy once described cricket as an Indian game accidentally invented by the English. For purists, a modern-day response would be describing it as an English game accidentally destroyed by the Indians. But even as cricket suffers from a spate of controversies, administrative squabbles and court cases, the India Today Group Mood of the Nation Poll suggests that Indians have not yet lost hope in a game they first appropriated and then ruled.

It's a finding that fits perfectly with the 'game is bigger than individuals'

school of thought. However, as cricket goes through a crisis of quality and credibility, perhaps giving a long rope to the administrators, who have presided over its fall from an object of celebration to an object of controversy, may not bode well in the long run. In that backdrop, when 39 per cent of our respondents say that the BCCI is "doing a good job", it is not exactly an encouraging sign for cricket.

But this thumbs-up becomes less emphatic when the questions get more pointed—more than 62 per cent respondents believe that politicians get into sport either for money or publicity,

and 52 per cent are convinced that they should not be involved in cricket at all. There is no question in their mind that cricket needs a cure—if not surgery, at least a strong dose of medicine.

The link between fans and players has always been an exciting engagement. The relationship between fans and administrators may be the one to watch closely in cricket's new era, where games are shorter, stakes are higher, and the temptation to cut corners may even lead the sport, as we knew it, towards the road to perdition.

by Kunal Pradhan

Follow the writer on Twitter @_kunal_pradhan

STAY AHEAD OF THE CURVE

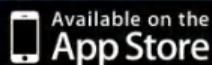
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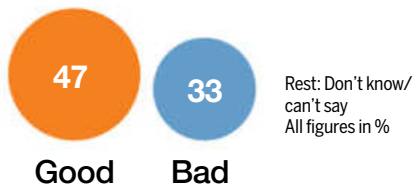
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FOR MANAGING TOMORROW

How will you rate PM Narendra Modi's handling of relations with Pakistan?



37% PEOPLE FEEL THAT POLITICIANS ARE THE MOST CORRUPT



Who is the most popular chief minister?

| | | |
|-----------------|----|----|
| ARVIND KEJRIWAL | 21 | 17 |
| J. JAYALALITHAA | 9 | - |
| MAMATA BANERJEE | 7 | 5 |
| AKHILESH YADAV | 7 | 8 |
| NITISH KUMAR | 5 | 3 |

● NOW
● APRIL 2015

Rest: Others/don't know/
can't say
All figures in %



Who has been the best prime minister of India so far?

| | | |
|----------------------|----|----|
| INDIRA GANDHI | 21 | 13 |
| NARENDRA MODI | 20 | 30 |
| ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE | 19 | 20 |
| JAWAHARLAL NEHRU | 7 | 8 |
| RAJIV GANDHI | 6 | 6 |

● NOW
● APRIL 2015

Rest: Others/don't know/
can't say
All figures in %



Who do you see as your role model?

| | | |
|------------------|----|----|
| APJ ABDUL KALAM | 14 | 11 |
| NARENDRA MODI | 11 | 13 |
| AMITABH BACHCHAN | 10 | 8 |
| SHAH RUKH KHAN | 9 | 14 |
| SACHIN TENDULKAR | 8 | 13 |

● NOW
● APRIL 2015

Rest: Others/don't know/
can't say
All figures in %

What is the biggest threat to the country's internal security?

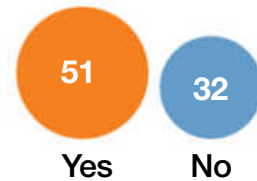
| | | |
|------------------------|----|----|
| CROSS-BORDER TERRORISM | 54 | 51 |
| MAOIST ATTACKS | 21 | 32 |
| NORTH-EAST INSURGENCY | 14 | 9 |

● NOW
● APRIL 2015

Rest: Don't know/can't say
All figures in %

19%
PEOPLE FEEL THAT PM NARENDRA MODI IS THE MOST HONEST POLITICIAN

Is PM Narendra Modi doing the right thing by getting India closer to the US?



Rest: Don't know/can't say
All figures in %



Who in your opinion is the leading Bollywood actor this year?

| | | |
|------------------|----|----|
| SALMAN KHAN | 17 | 15 |
| AMITABH BACHCHAN | 13 | 10 |
| AAMIR KHAN | 10 | 14 |
| SHAH RUKH KHAN | 9 | 14 |
| AJAY DEVGN | 8 | 7 |

● NOW
● APRIL 2015

Rest: Others/don't know/can't say; All figures in %

Who do you think is the leading Bollywood actress this year?

| | | |
|------------------|----|----|
| DEEPIKA PADUKONE | 15 | 17 |
| KATRINA KAIF | 13 | 15 |
| PRIYANKA CHOPRA | 10 | 11 |
| SONAKSHI SINHA | 8 | 7 |
| KAREENA KAPOOR | 8 | 14 |

● NOW
● APRIL 2015

Rest: Others/don't know/can't say
All figures in %

Who is India's greatest living sportsperson?

| | | |
|------------------|----|----|
| SACHIN TENDULKAR | 17 | 14 |
| M.S. DHONI | 13 | 8 |
| VIRAT KOHLI | 9 | 5 |
| KAPIL DEV | 9 | 11 |
| SUNIL GAVASKAR | 8 | 10 |

● NOW
● APRIL 2015

Rest: Others/don't know/can't say
All figures in %

By Sandeep Unnithan

General Dalbir Singh is to embark on his toughest challenge since taking over as army chief last July. Beginning August 25, sources say, the Army chief will mediate in a contentious battle between the government and ex-servicemen on the implementation of One Rank, One Pension (OROP).

The unprecedented step of involving the army chief was precipitated by a series of events over the past few months: an unresolved deadlock between the defence and finance ministries, the impact of simmering street protests on serving armed forces personnel and the failure of talks between the government and ex-servicemen. The OROP issue is now being handled directly by the PMO which will attempt to resolve the issue. On August 18, General Dalbir Singh first intervened to facilitate a meeting between the PM's Principal Secretary Nripendra Misra and ex-servicemen.

The hour-long meeting, the veterans' first interaction with the government since the start of their June 15 relay hunger strike, ended inconclusively. Misra wanted the protesting military veterans to "restore normalcy", wind down their nationwide campaign—particularly a fast-unto-death begun by three ex-servicemen at Jantar Mantar on August 17. The veterans wanted a deadline for implementation. Misra could give them none.

Prime Minister Modi, sources told INDIA TODAY, was keen to firewall the service chiefs from the two-month-long protest by the veterans at Jantar Mantar. Now, he had little option but to recognise the umbilical ties between serving and retired soldiers. General Dalbir Singh will be represented by senior serving army officers in the talks with the veterans. "Only a serving army chief can command the respect of the ex-servicemen," a veteran says. The build-up had been gradual. On August 13, four former armed forces chiefs wrote to President Pranab Mukherjee warning him that the stand-off had the potential to inflict long-term damage on India's

MODI TO WALK OR

After a nasty impasse between the defence and finance minister of veterans on hunger strike, the One Rank, One Pension issue



THE LOGJAM

The veterans and government are deadlocked over the year from which equal pensions will be paid

GOVERNMENT

Willing to offer same pensions only to military personnel retiring before January 1, 2011.

REASON

The government could save over Rs 4,000 crore. Other government services will not make similar demands.

OP TALK

ry and the ugly spectacle is now back in the PM's court



NARENDRA MODI MEETS COMMANDERS AT THE ANNUAL COMBINED COMMANDERS CONFERENCE OF THE ARMED FORCES IN DELHI

VETERANS

Will stick by January 1, 2014 date as mentioned in UPA government note of February 2014.

REASON

The 2011 cut-off date is only enhancement of pension and means dilution of One Rank, One Pension.

apolitical military ethos and the self-esteem of its serving soldiers.

The Delhi Police's inept attempt to evict the protesting veterans from Jantar Mantar on August 14 pumped fresh oxygen into the struggle. Visuals of veterans being roughed up by police triggered outrage across the country and prompted an angst-ridden open letter signed by seven former army chiefs, two former air force chiefs and a navy chief to the PM. The August 17 letter condemned the police action and warned of serious blowback from the OROP imbroglio to the services.

It was the worst indictment of the government by former chiefs. No issue has in recent years prompted 14 former service chiefs to write to the government, another sign of how the NDA completely misread the campaign. Worse, by repeatedly promising to deliver on an issue deflected by earlier governments and then seeming to backtrack on his commitment, Prime Minister Modi exposed himself to ridicule. "He promised a Rs 1.25-lakh crore package for Bihar but he does not have Rs 8,000 crore for OROP for ex-servicemen, who for the first time are sitting on protest," Congress Vice President Rahul Gandhi said in Amethi on August 18.

The PMO was already in firefighting mode three days before the PM's Independence Day speech, where he once again reiterated his government's commitment to OROP as "a long-pending issue, whose discussions were underway and in the last stages". On August 12, PMO officials contacted former army chief General Ved Prakash Malik to mediate with the ex-servicemen. General Malik then roped in a passionate OROP votary, Rajya Sabha Member of Parliament Rajeev Chandrasekhar. The negotiations which took place in Chandrasekhar's North Avenue office involved General Malik, a joint secretary from the PMO and veterans' groups. But just two days later, by August 14, the former chief realised that both sides were unwilling to compromise. Talks broke down completely.

With the PMO now once again set to resume talks with the veterans

beginning August 25, it will have to negotiate the same minefield which the parleys with General Malik and Misra walked over—to get ex-servicemen to agree to reduce their demands.

If the government agrees to OROP from 2015 onwards, it will need to pay Rs 8,293 crore per year plus an equal sum in arrears for 2014. In negotiations with the veterans it revealed a willingness to pay Rs 4,000 crore and hike existing pensions by 50 per cent. The government wants to make 2011, not 2014, as the year for a cut-off date for revised pensions, far short of the OROP that the veterans want.

Anything less than One Rank, One Pension will only mean enhancing the existing pensions," says Major General Satbir Singh, chairman of the Indian Ex Servicemen Movement (IESM), who lists three key demands: (a) The definition of OROP is sacrosanct and will not be tampered with—equal pensions for similar ranks and same length of service, regardless of the last drawn pay; (b) OROP will be effective from April 1, 2014, as per the UPA's February 2014 decision; (c) and that the NDA should announce a date of implementation. These will prove to be hard decisions for the government to take especially on an issue that seemed a done deal when Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar calculated last December that the government's Rs 1.25 lakh crore annual pension bill would marginally increase when it paid Rs 8,293 crore to the ex-servicemen. The Arun Jaitley-led finance ministry stubbornly opposed this. "It (OROP) will impose a huge financial burden on us and open the floodgates for similar such claims from the paramilitary forces," a senior finance ministry official told INDIA TODAY.

Irrespective of its outcome, the acrimony over OROP has upset the delicate civil-military balance. "There are some people who feel that the neglect of the military has tended to become contempt for the military," says General Malik. Clearly the hidden costs of this imbroglio will be more than just financial.

Follow the writer on Twitter @SandeepUnnithan



HOUSE OF UNCOMMONS

The Congress will find it tough to justify stalling the winter session and stands to lose face if it doesn't. The BJP plans on playing the waiting game after a bitter monsoon harvest.

By Jyoti Malhotra

S ometime in the 1970s, when former Russian ambassador to India Vyacheslav Trubnikov was a journalist with the Russian news agency RIA Novosti, he ran into Jyoti Basu and Atal Bihari Vajpayee outside Parliament, laughing and chatting with each other. "But I just saw you attacking each other on the floor of the House," an aghast Trubnikov told the leaders, as he recounted the story. "I was totally mystified by the complete change in their demeanour."

Both leaders, from opposite sides of the political spectrum, then went on

to teach Trubnikov a lesson in political camaraderie. "India's vibrant democracy allows us to disagree in ideological terms, but that doesn't mean we don't respect each other. Perhaps this is because we cannot afford the Indian version of Stalin's Gulag, they told me," Trubnikov recalled.

Both, the late Basu and Vajpayee, who is too ill to attend Parliament, would have been dismayed to watch the manner in which the inheritors of that great political tradition conduct themselves these days. If the monsoon session is any indication, an enormous chasm has opened up in the political class, embittering both sides so deeply that there doesn't seem to

be any meeting point. Congress Vice President Rahul Gandhi had insisted that unless the government sacked External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and Rajasthan Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje, for allegedly helping tainted former IPL boss Lalit Modi, and Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan in the aftermath of the Vyapam scam, the Congress would not let Parliament function.

He was as good as his word. In fact, Rahul showed that he intended to expose the cosy club that Parliament had become over the years when he told the House that Swaraj had held his hand and asked him, "Beta, why are you so angry with me?" It wasn't



PANKAJ NANGIA

always like that, of course. The new low began in 2004, when the NDA lost the elections and Swaraj and Uma Bharati threatened to shave their heads if Sonia Gandhi was anointed prime minister.

It seemed as if the BJP was so shell-shocked at its defeat that it couldn't come to terms with it. The first meeting between the newly elected Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and the new opposition, Vajpayee and L.K. Advani, didn't go well when Singh threw down the papers that Advani and Vajpayee had brought with them for discussion. On the face of it, Congress leaders point out that they are only doing to the BJP today what it did to them when they were in power. That may be good, short-term tactic but it seems to be terrible strategy. There is already some nervousness in the party about the course of action the Congress will follow in the winter session that begins in late November. Since Prime Minister Narendra Modi has decided against sacking the trio, Congressmen

are wondering whether they will have to block another session of Parliament just to save face. "Watch how the public mood turns if the Congress stalls Parliament again," Chandan Mitra, Raja Sabha MP and editor of the *Pioneer* newspaper, said. "We must discuss all bills, whether GST or land bill, on the floor of the House." In the wake of the party conceding several amendments on the land bill demanded by the Congress, BJP sources said Finance Minister Arun Jaitley had sought to break the ice with Congress leaders on the Goods and Service Tax (GST) Bill. But he was repulsed with the same insistence—all conversation can begin only with resignations.

"(Former external affairs minister) Jaswant Singh used to quote a Rajasthan proverb during the Vajpayee days—if you want to climb a tree, you should keep at least one branch secure so you know how to get off it," Jaitley told INDIA TODAY. Nevertheless, a large section of the BJP remains uncomfortable with Speaker Sumitra Mahajan's

UNION MINISTERS AND SENIOR NDA LEADERS PROTEST AGAINST THE OPPOSITION'S HOLD-UP OF HOUSE PROCEEDINGS AT PARLIAMENT COMPLEX ON AUGUST 13

GST ARITHMETIC IN RAJYA SABHA

TOTAL NO. OF SEATS: **245**; TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY: **163**

THOSE IN FAVOUR

| | |
|--|---|
| | BJP 48 |
| | Shiv Sena 3 |
| | Shiromani Akali Dal 3 |
| | RPI-Athawale 1 |
| | Telugu Desam 6 |
| | All India N Rangasamy Congress 1 |
| | Nagaland People's Front 1 |
| | Trinamool Congress 12 |
| | Samajwadi Party 15 |
| | AIADMK 11 |
| | Biju Janata Dal 7 |
| | Peoples Democratic Party 2 |
| | Independents 7 |
| | Telangana Rashtra Samithi 1 |
| | Sikkim Democratic Front 1 |
| | Bodoland People's Front 1 |
| | INLD 1 |
| | Janata Dal (Secular) 1 |
| | TOTAL 122 |

THOSE AGAINST

| | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| | Congress 68 |
| | Janata Dal (United) 12 |
| | CPI(M) 9 |
| | CPI 2 |
| | Rashtriya Janata Dal 1 |
| | Jharkhand Mukti Morcha 1 |
| | DMK 4 |
| | TOTAL 97 |

WAVERING

| | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| | NCP 6 |
| | Bahujan Samaj Party 10 |
| | TOTAL 16 |

decision to expel 25 Congress MPs for five days, although no one openly criticised the decision because it was believed to have “come from the top”, namely the PM and BJP President Amit Shah. That one decision poured cold water on any back-channel mediation between the BJP and the Congress.

According to one party leader, Modi believes that Sonia Gandhi is touchy about her family and will do anything to protect its name. Which is why in the last week of the monsoon session, when it was clear that Sonia and Rahul—and more Rahul than Sonia—were leading the strategy to disrupt Parliament, Modi and Shah are said to have emphasised the targeting of the “*maa-beta*”, rather than the entire party.

The BJP desperately needs to produce some results, especially on the eve of the Bihar polls. The loss of the land bill has increased the pressure on its top leadership to pass the GST. Informal talks with a variety of Opposition parties have been opened on the possibility of a short two-day session to push the bill through. Jaitley is said to be in favour of the session, but others point out that the risk of not winning is too high.

With 48 Rajya Sabha MPs, the BJP strategy is to isolate the Congress and wean away the other Opposition parties on the plank of economic reform. While the Trinamool Congress (12 MPs) and the Samajwadi Party (15 MPs) are on board, Mayawati's Bahujan Samaj Party (10 MPs) is said to be wavering. The Janata Dal (United), with 12 MPs, which had come out in favour of GST at the start of the session, is unlikely to agree, especially after the PM took on Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar in his recent rallies.

If it comes to a vote, the JD(U) is certain to support the Congress (68 MPs) and the Left (11 MPs) against the government. And because the GST is a constitutional

POLITICS BEATS ECONOMICS

The earliest GST can kick in is October 2016

One of the key reforms promised by the UPA and now the NDA government, GST has been touted as a legislation that will subsume India's multiple taxes—indirect taxes such as the excise duty, countervailing duty and service tax. Also, state levies such as the value-added tax, octroi and entry tax, luxury tax. The tax will make compliance more stringent and add more than 1 per cent to India's GDP. But in its current form, experts say, GST is more a political decision. Even if the rate is 20 per cent, exclusion of petroleum, electricity, tobacco and real estate will lead to a huge impact on prices, says Sagar Shah, national head, Indirect Taxes, BDO India LLP.

The government got itself in a bind as states relentlessly pushed for exclusion. In the current form, “supplier states” such as Maharashtra and Gujarat will get to levy an additional 1 per cent tax. “This will make GST one of the most confusing systems in the world,” Shah says. Meanwhile, the Congress is adamant that 1 per cent additional tax needs to go, tobacco and electricity need to be included and revenue neutral rate of GST should be 18 per cent. “The whole negotiation and legislation process of GST has been flawed with the government not delineating constitutional changes from the legislative,” adds Satya Poddar, senior tax partner, EY India. So even as Revenue Secretary Shaktikanta Das recently said that administratively, India is ready to roll out GST from April 1, 2016, the contract for setting up GSTN, the IT platform needed for its rollout, is yet to be awarded. “The earliest it can be implemented is October 2016. The government should not be vague about the implementation date,” Poddar says.

by Shweta Punj

amendment and needs two-thirds of the House present and voting to pass (at present, 163 MPs in a House of 245), the figures do not add up in favour of the BJP.

A senior BJP leader admitted that the party had come to terms with postponing the GST Bill to mid-2016, when several seats in the Rajya Sabha will change hands, mostly in favour of the BJP. In fact, as many as 76 MPs will retire (including 21 from the Congress and 17 from the BJP) next year, although several BJP MPs will get re-elected, especially from the newly won states of Maharashtra, Jharkhand and Haryana.

For the Congress, this is bad news. This means key regional parties such as the BSP and SP will weigh their bets before deciding on future courses of action. What this also means is that Modi has decided that he will not reach across the *lakshman rekha* and shake hands with Sonia in the Lok Sabha. In fact, the PM has hardly come to the House—his absence during the Congress adjournment motion, when Swaraj gave her defence of her relationship with Lalit Modi, is considered terrible parliamentary form—although he often sits in his room in Parliament complex and meets people.

“Delhi is not Ahmedabad,” grumbled Pavan Varma of the JD(U). “As leader of the House in which his party has a majority, he must make the first move.” Asked why the PM hasn't spoken on any of the serious issues so far that have roiled the nation, one BJP leader simply shrugged his shoulders, “That's not his style.”

Perhaps a throwaway remark by Minister for Environment and Forests Prakash Javadekar at the end of the monsoon session best captures Modi's way of thinking. “If the Congress party won't let Parliament work, then the government will have to work without Parliament,” Javadekar said.

That penny is still dropping in the crevasse of political bitterness. So far, no one has heard the sound it has made.

Follow the writer on Twitter @jomalhotra



SONU KISHAN

HURDLES FOR THE HERDER

Lalu Prasad ruled Bihar, and subsequently the opposition space, banking on the Yadavs. As the state gets set for assembly elections, the RJD chief is beginning to realise those days may not return.

By Amitabh Srivastava

A resident of Bihar's Nawada district, Sankesh Yadav is the first person from his family to prepare for competitive examinations. The 22-year-old student is also the first in his family to have made up his mind on which button to push when the assembly elections come calling this autumn. It will be the one bearing the Lotus ("Narendra Modi's BJP"), not the lantern of Lalu Prasad

Yadav's Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD). In a state notorious for voting along caste lines, this is significant. Until as recently as the last state assembly elections in 2010, Lalu was the first and only choice for people from the Yadav community.

While his father Tulsi Yadav, a farmer, disagrees—he still bats for Lalu, who, he says, empowered the community and gave them a voice during the RJD's 15-year administration from 1990—it means little for

THINNING CROWD, WANING INFLUENCE? LALU YADAV WITH RJD WORKERS IN PATNA

Sankesh. That was a different day and age, he reasons. In fact, so different an era that, like him, many first-time and young voters in Bihar, who are expected to tilt the scales in the forthcoming polls, were still in their shorts when the RJD last formed the government in Patna—in 2000. "I don't remember those days, and we (the youth) have no connect with Laluji either," Sankesh says. He knows exactly why that "connect" is absent: "Today, everyone wants prosperity, development and jobs. Narendra Modi talks about (prosperity for) everyone. He also seems to be the best of the available lot; he seems capable of delivering on his promises. It is time to rise above our petty caste affiliations."

In next-door Sheikhpura district, Dharmendra Kumar, 23, of Barni village, says Bihar has given more than enough time to Lalu and the BJP "must get a chance" now. "There was no development during the Lalu era. I would rather press NOTA ("none of the above" in the electronic voting machine) if the BJP candidate does



not look promising but I will never vote for Lalu or Nitish,” he asserts. A short hop away in state capital Patna, Rajesh Kumar Yadav, 25, who runs a travel agency, is just as clear: “We cannot vote for Lalu Yadav. He was instrumental in imposing a *gunda raj* in Bihar.”

As the poll season comes closer, the debate is centred around one man—why Modi, or why not Modi—for every politically conscious person in Bihar, of course including those from the Yadav community. There are fewer “why Lalu”, but even that marks a major shift for Yadavs, whose support for the man was once considered a given.

And no one realises this better than the RJD chief himself. Lalu is acutely aware that Team Modi is trying hard to poach his Yadav vote bank. Prime Minister Modi, who on August 18 addressed his third election rally in Bihar in less than a month, has been trying hard to woo Yadav voters, invoking “*Dwarkadhish*” (literally king of Dwarka, Lord Krishna, who was, it is believed, a Yadav). Lalu may have largely retained his hold among the Yadavs but his desperation has become conspicuous. He asks them, almost fervently, to stay united. He also asserts his caste identity more frequently than ever before. It’s a far cry from the Lalu Yadav of yore.

Until last year’s General Election Lalu could afford to even chide men from his caste during election meetings and then expect them to fall in line—behind him. “Ahirs have taken a lot of beating. They return to their senses only after a good beating, *bhai*,” he had said at a campaign meeting in Darbhanga in April 2014, calling the Yadav clan Ahir, in the local fashion.

Sixteen months later, on the eve of another election, Lalu is no longer reproaching them. Instead, his demeanour, if not the tone, is beseeching. “*Uttho, Yaduvanshiyon, dikha do dum* (Rise, Yadavs, show your power). And beware of the BJP; they are trying to divide us,” Lalu said in Patna on August 16. No fellow politician, no political pundit, no academic or journalist recalls Lalu making such ardent appeal to people from the Yadav community in the last 25 years. Says a



SLIDE OF A DREAM SELLER

The undisputed consolidation king of Bihar, and his gradual demise over three decades

THE ‘Y’ AXIS

1 Lalu’s relevance in Bihar now depends on his ability to rally members of his Yadav community.

2 Lalu may bag a chunk of Yadav votes on RJD seats but looks unlikely to deliver much to JD(U) or the Congress on the remaining 140 seats.

3 Coming from the rival Kurmi community, Nitish Kumar is often blamed for the Yadavs’ diminishing clout since 2005.

THE ‘MY’ MYSTERY

1995

The beginning of Lalu’s (then with undivided Janata Dal) love affair with the Muslim-Yadav—or MY—vote bank. The going remained good until 2004.

1999

The first time Yadavs think beyond Lalu in Lok Sabha polls. He wins only seven out of undivided Bihar’s 54 Lok Sabha seats.

2004

The Yadavs return to Lalu but a year later a fall in vote percentage dethrones the RJD in Bihar.

2009

Lalu falls flat when only Yadavs seem to back him in the 2009 LS and 2010 assembly polls. Muslims flock to the Nitish camp.

2014

Situation reverses, as Muslims unite behind Lalu in LS polls while Yadavs dump him to board the Narendra Modi bandwagon.

Shifting voters

SLIPPING FORTUNES

Yadav votes stay with Lalu in 2005 and 2010, Muslim voters shift to JD(U), then with NDA, in 2009 and 2010

Muslim votes return to Lalu in 2014, while Yadavs veer towards Narendra Modi’s BJP

In 2015, Muslim voters apparently backing RJD-JD(U), while BJP is wooing Yadavs

Family Reverses

2009: Lalu Prasad loses from Patliputra Lok Sabha seat

2010: Rabri Devi loses Sonepur and Raghapur, both Yadav-dominated assembly constituencies

2014: Rabri loses in Saran, daughter Misa Bharti in Patliputra Lok Sabha seats

senior RJD leader on condition of anonymity, “In all those years, we have seen Lalu reprimanding his caste men. They used to laugh and vote for us. But this time, not many seem to be laughing with Lalu.” The Raja of the Yadavs, it is gradually becoming clearer, is no longer assured of their unflinching support.

AN UNEASY EQUATION

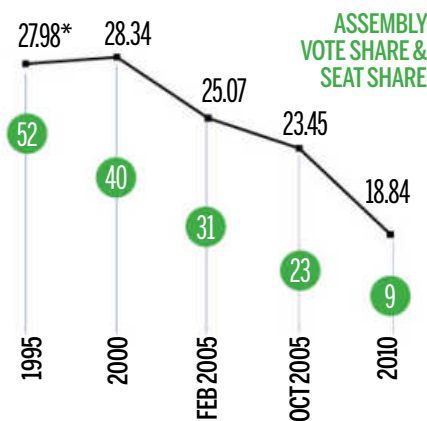
With various sub-castes, Yadavs constitute the single largest caste group in Bihar. Their strength—approximately

14 per cent of the electorate—propelled Lalu to electoral prominence back in 1990, when he first became the Bihar chief minister. And in the company of the Muslim voters, who constitute more than 16 per cent of the Bihar electorate, Lalu had forged a social base that let the RJD occupy the main opposition space in state politics, after the JD(U)-BJP alliance unseated Rabri Devi, from 2005 to June 2013.

Of Lalu’s much vaunted, and once seemingly impregnable MY—Muslim-Yadav—combo, the minority

LOSING THE GRIP

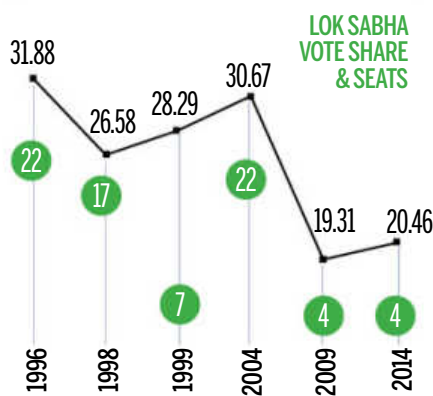
The RJD poll story: Slipping in Vidhan Sabha, up and down in Lok Sabha



Figures in ● are seat share in percentage

*Vote share

^ 1995 and 2000 polls in undivided Bihar



** Undivided Bihar (till '99) had 54 LS seats

^ Lalu fought as part of undivided

Janata Dal; formed RJD in 1997

Figures in ● are number of seats

YADAVS IN SAFFRON CAMP

In an effort to split Yadav votes, the BJP has put forward a strong line-up of Yadav leaders. These include Leader of Opposition in the Assembly Nand Kishore Yadav and Union minister Ram Kripal Yadav. Besides, the BJP is also expecting the support of Pappu Yadav, the expelled RJD leader who has formed his own Jan Adhikar Party. The *bahubali*-politician's sole aim is to prevent Lalu from consolidating the Yadav vote. The party is also expected to encourage independent Yadav candidates to cut into RJD-JD(U) votes.



NAND KISHORE YADAV (CENTRE), ONE OF BJP'S KEY LEADERS IN BIHAR

gradual shift in Lalu's power base from close quarters is trusted lieutenant-turned-foe Ram Kripal Yadav. "Yadavs across the state are aware that Lalu has stitched a partnership with Nitish Kumar only to get his two sons established in politics. Now, why would a common Yadav forfeit his or her dislike for Nitish just to carve out a career for Lalu's sons," asks the Union minister of state for drinking water and sanitation. Having worked by Lalu's side for 20 years, Ram Kripal joined BJP on the eve of the 2014 elections, peeved that Lalu could dare field his daughter Misa and ignore his claim for the Patliputra seat.

His critics say Lalu has learnt zilch from the defeats of his family members in successive elections. The next RJD promotees include sons Tej Pratap and Tejaswi, among the main men in the RJD's campaign war room this time around. Unlike Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav, who almost singlehandedly defeated Mayawati's Bahujan Samaj Party in 2012 by connecting with the people with his exhaustive tours of the state, Tej Pratap and Tejaswi are seen by even RJD insiders as carriers of Lalu's legacy, not men of the masses.

So as the elections draw closer and the man who was their unquestioned leader not long ago remains busy promoting his children to take over the party's reins, people from Yadav communities are contemplative, silent and at times even confrontational when asked about their voting preference. Although Lalu is still their tallest leader and a majority of Yadavs, like all others in Bihar, are still relying on caste equations, the field has opened up. For people from the Yadav communities, especially the younger generation, there is suddenly more to elections than Lalu Yadav and his RJD.

So if the BJP fields a Yadav candidate, chances are brighter that Yadav votes will go to that corner if pitted against a non-Yadav candidate from the Lalu-Nitish-Congress alliance.

For Lalu, it's now or never, because there will be little steam left in his brand of politics once the Yadavs switch sides for good.

Follow the writer on Twitter @Amitabh1975

community was seen to have switched loyalties to Nitish's JD(U) in 2009 Lok Sabha and 2010 Bihar assembly elections. But through thick and thin the Yadavs had stood behind Lalu (see box). The bond looked glued, until the Modi wave undid it last summer and the first chinks surfaced in Lalu's Yadav arsenal.

But if the cracks are widening each passing week, Lalu, many feel, should be the last one to complain. Busy promoting his family to take over the reins, he was seen to have been taking

down the party he had built, brick by brick. Had Lalu been his earlier assiduous self, he would have noticed the first chinks in 2009, when he lost the Patliputra Lok Sabha seat, although he managed to retain Saran. It was to be the last electoral victory for his family. In 2010, Rabri Devi lost from the Yadav-dominated assembly seats of Sonepur and Raghapur. In 2014 General Election, Rabri bit the dust from Saran, and daughter Misa Bharti from Patliputra.

One man who has seen this



Photo Courtesy GUJARAT GUARDIAN

ANANDIBEN'S PATEL P

The Patel community's demand for inclusion in OBC quota threatens to blow up in the Gujarat government's face

By Uday Mahurkar

On July 6, 1985, Madhavsinh Solanki stepped down after being the chief minister of Gujarat for a little over 100 days in his second successive term. Problems began when Solanki decided to increase the quota of reserved seats in educational institutions for Kshatriyas, a backward OBC

community in Gujarat. The decision sparked off protests, which led to violence, leading to his resignation. The anti-reservation agitation was led by the Patels, on the whole an affluent community that forms 12 to 15 per cent of Gujarat's population.

Just over 30 years on, an organisation called the Patidar Anamat Andolan Samiti (PAAS) brought the city of Surat to a halt on August 17 with a rally attended by more than 400,000 people. Patidars are Patels in Gujarat, and the organisation is demanding inclusion of the community in the list of OBCs and a share of the 27 per cent reservation pie. The wheel, it seems, has come a full circle. The once anti-quota Patels are now making their pro-reservation

demands become more than just an irritant for another CM—one from their community, Anandiben Patel.

The ongoing stir, led by Hardik Patel, 22, a small-time businessman from Viramgam, not very far from Mehsana and Gandhinagar, the home districts of PM Narendra Modi, CM Patel and BJP President Amit Shah, is supported by several Patel caste groups. That they are more than just bluster was evident from the words of Hardik: "It's a misnomer that all Patels are affluent; only a handful are. If we don't get reservation we will show our political power in the elections to come." While some believe Hardik is ambitious and is using the agitation to realise his political ambitions, he

MORE THAN 400,000
PEOPLE TOOK PART
IN THE RALLY IN
SURAT ON AUGUST 17



RESERVATION WINDOW

Gujarat's main farming community, the Patels are the equivalent of Jats of Rajasthan and UP and Reddys of Andhra Pradesh

QUOTA

27%

Reservation for OBCs in educational institutions and government jobs

TOTAL

146

Communities in the list of Other Backward Classes in the state

THAKORE

27%

Backward Kshatriyas, the largest caste population in the state's OBC basket

PATELS

12-15

per cent of Gujarat's total population, overall they are an affluent section

no result. Led by Gujarat cabinet minister Nitin Patel, the committee was set up by the state government at the behest of Amit Shah. Nitin Patel says the Supreme Court's recent judgment striking down reservation for relatively affluent caste groups such as the Jats means the state government has little role to play in this case. "But we are still willing to talk," he adds. Despite some differences on strategy the newly formed PASS supports Hardik's PAAS.

The Patel community's demand meanwhile has led to similar appeals from Brahmins and upper caste Thakkars, a trading caste. It has also led to threats of protests from powerful OBC groups such as the Rabaris (shepherds) and Bharwads, as well as the backward Kshatriyas, in the event of any division in the OBC quota. At least one organisation, Thakore Kshatriya Sena, has announced that it will oppose any move to include Patels in the OBC list. "We will not brook any interference in the OBC quota. We will oppose it tooth and nail," says its leader, Alpesh Thakore. The Sena has a presence in 9,000 villages—nearly half the state—where it runs programmes for social uplift of OBC Kshatriyas.

The PAAS and the Sardar Patel Group, another organisation of Patels, have held 107 rallies in the state at the city and tehsil headquarter-levels since July 6, when the first Patel rally was staged in Mehsana. Even the smallest rally has seen participation of 5,000 to 10,000 people, and the total participation to date is estimated to be around 2 million—nearly 17 per cent of the Patel population, and about three or four per cent of the state's residents.

Despite denials by Hardik Patel and others about any political affiliation to the ongoing protests, the way the whole agitation has taken shape indicates the presence of political leaders in their camp. Many in the political circles say some leaders sidelined first by Modi and then his protege, Anandiben, are stoking passions. And if that be the case, the Chief Minister, with governance in Gujarat weakened in the absence of Modi's charisma, could be staring at a full-blown crisis sooner rather than later.

Follow the writer on Twitter @UdayMahurkar

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The speeches made at the Surat rally and the placards carried by those in attendance, primarily young and middle-aged men from the community, bring home the first real threat for CM Patel's 15-month-old government. "Arise Patels, demand reservation" and "Patidars can make or break governments", they proclaimed.

Even if one considers that the gathering had a fair sprinkling of jobless Patel workers of the much weakened Surat diamond industry, it set the alarm bells ringing. And the bells grew only louder as the day wore on, with talks between a ministerial committee and Patidar Andolan Sankalan Samiti (PASS) in Gandhinagar yielding

AIN

WHY LALIT MODI IS STILL ON THE FRONT FOOT

Even as investigators close in with warrants and notices, the former IPL boss knows that securing his extradition from Britain will not be easy

By Kunal Pradhan

What do you do when Parliament loses an entire session because of you? When MPs and bureaucrats in Britain are in the dock for allegedly doing you undue favours? When the Enforcement Directorate (ED) is booking you not just under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) but also under the more stringent Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA)? When your overseas bank accounts in Singapore are liquidated and sealed? When a cricket board you drew your strength from bans you for life? When a Mumbai court issues a non-bailable warrant for your arrest? And when a red corner notice is about to be sent to Interpol to form the basis of your extradition to India?

Well, if you are Lalit Modi, you smile.

Call it bluster, call it bravado, call it plain delusion, Modi seems largely unaffected by the saga now being referred to as his first name attached to the most dreaded of suffixes. 'Lalitgate' has crippled a chief minister, brought an external affairs minister to tears on the floor of the House, and put a ruling coalition with a handsome mandate firmly under the cosh. But the reason behind Modi's unbridled confidence is simple—come what may, he knows it will be extremely difficult to bring him back to India to answer for his alleged crimes.

In his Sloane Street home in London, where he met India Today TV's Consulting Editor Rajdeep Sardesai

on August 11, Modi thundered, "The fact that Parliament has been stalled because of me shows that the charges are politically motivated." He also declared that his lawyers would refute every allegation levelled against him.

These comments have been interspersed with tweets about Congress Vice President Rahul Gandhi and IPL Chairman Rajeev Shukla that have made him the new poster boy for BJP's army of online supporters. On August 17, for example, Modi tweeted: "Papoo's @OfficeOfRG still not asked @ShuklaRajiv to resign from #denofblackmoney @ipl why? all talk

NOW THAT A NON-BAILABLE WARRANT FOR MODI'S ARREST HAS BEEN SECURED, A RED CORNER NOTICE THROUGH INTERPOL IS IN THE OFFING.

like @INCIndia". And on August 13, he said, "Breaking news: My Challenge to PAPPU@OfficeOfRG - CLEAN CRICKET - 1st Sack the man responsible for the mess @ShuklaRajiv #walkthetalk." The tweets, as usual, were peppered with emojis ranging from TV sets to transistors to dollar bills.

Although Modi has not been tried in a court of law so far, the most detailed investigation carried out against him was by the BCCI's internal disciplinary committee that cut

across party lines—Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, then power minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, and former IPL chairman Chirayu Amin. In a 133-page order, the committee listed all the charges against Modi in detail, examined them, and then pronounced judgment on each of them. In broad terms, the committee held Modi guilty of the following:

- Trying to rig the second round of IPL bidding in 2010 to favour the Videocon and Adani groups.

- Arm-twisting and threatening the Kochi franchise to push them out of the IPL.

- Striking a TV rights deal in 2009 with WSG (Mauritius) and Sony-MSM and that ensured Sony paid WSG an \$80 million facilitation fee to an offshore account. Modi allegedly made the BCCI stand guarantee for this payment without consultation with the board's secretary or president.

- Colluding with local officials in Britain to create Project Victoria, a local T20 league outside the ambit of the England & Wales Cricket Board.

- Irregularities in the sale of FCT 150—the 150 seconds per match for IPL promotion that was later sold to advertisers—to former Sony India chief Kunal Dasgupta's company Pioneer Diagadsys.

- Irregularities in sale of the theatrical rights of the IPL.

The principal charge against Modi stems from his role in the MSM-WSG deal. In 2008, BCCI had awarded media rights for 10 years to WSG for \$918 million (Rs 5,967 crore at current exchange rate). WSG entered into a deal with MSM to make Sony



the official broadcaster. The contract was replaced a year later with a nine-year deal, signed at 3 a.m. on March 15, 2009, where MSM paid the BCCI \$1.63 billion (Rs 10,595 crore at current exchange rate). Sony once again returned as the broadcaster, and the allegation is that a payment of \$80 million (Rs 520 crore at current exchange rate) as “facilitation fee” was made illegally by MSM Singapore to WSG Mauritius. The charge against Modi is that he benefited from this financial transaction. But Modi told India Today TV on August 12 that the allegation that he’d taken money in the Sony-MSM and WSG television rights deal was “hogwash”.

It was on the basis of the disciplinary committee report that Modi was banned for life by the BCCI, and the ED and Income-Tax investigators are reportedly looking into several of the same issues, and sources suggest, reaching similar conclusions. In fact, a few of the charges for which Modi had been absolved by the BCCI—for example the ownership of IPL teams Rajasthan Royals, Kings XI Punjab and Kolkata Knight Riders—are still part of the ED investigation, sources within the agency say. It is in order to improve their chances of bringing Modi back to India that the ED has chosen to book him under the PMLA. Blaming the UPA government for targeting Modi only under the softer FEMA, Jaitley said in the Lok Sabha: “He (Modi) became liable for arrest for the first time in August 2015.” Not only does PMLA allow for rigorous imprisonment between three and seven years, foreign countries take criminal cases such as money laundering more seriously. The ED will, however, not only have to prove that Modi received kick-backs overseas but also routed part of that money back to India.

I HISTORY ON HIS SIDE

While the government is standing by Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj and Rajasthan Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje for allegedly helping him over the course of the last four years, it is under pressure to bring Modi to book in order to highlight its impartiality. Now that a non-bailable warrant for his arrest has

LONG ROAD TO EXTRADITION

Getting Modi back from Britain may neither be quick nor easy. Here's how the system works.

1 REQUEST

An extradition request will have to be made by India to Theresa May, Britain's secretary of state for home. This will be accompanied by supporting evidence—such as a non-bailable warrant for arrest, and details of the crime to show it is a valid case, and that there is no political vendetta.

2

COURT STEPS IN

If the request is deemed valid, the home secretary will send the request to court. In London, this is usually the Westminster Magistrates' Court. If the court is satisfied that enough information has been supplied, it could order Modi's arrest.

3

PRELIMINARY HEARING

The court will then begin its preliminary hearing, in which a date will be set for the hearing.

7

EXTRADITION

Only if all legal channels are cleared will Modi be extradited.

APPEALS

Once the extradition order has been passed by the court, Modi's lawyers or the legal team for the Indian state can appeal before the British high court within 14 days. Modi, or the Indian state, can later approach the British Supreme Court against the high court's order, if leave to appeal has been granted.

6

5 FINAL APPROVAL

If the court passes an order of extradition, the extradition papers still need to be signed by the home secretary. She must determine, among other things, that Modi's extradition is not a ruse to try him in other cases.

4

EXTRADITION HEARING

During the hearing, a legal team representing India will have to satisfy the judge that the extradition request is in line with Britain's 2003 extradition act and the 1998 Human Rights Act. The crime will have to be proved by the Indian legal team, with evidence to show that the charge holds, and that it is an extraditable offence.

been secured from a Mumbai court on August 5, a red corner notice through Interpol is in the offing. A red corner notice is issued to determine the location and arrest of a person "with a view to his or her extradition".

But Modi is well aware that extradition battles are not a simple matter—sometimes dragging for years even in the case of convicted terror suspects. Three high-profile cases bear evidence to that. In 2005, the British high court denied the extradition of music composer Nadeem Saifi, who was wanted in the murder of T-Series owner Gulshan Kumar in

1997, on the grounds that the charges against him were unfounded. The extradition of Ravi Shankaran, wanted in the Navy War Room espionage case of 2006, was granted by a London court, only to be overturned by the British high court in 2014 on the grounds that there was no prima facie evidence. And, the extradition of former Dawood Ibrahim-aide Tiger Hanif, wanted for his alleged role in two bomb blasts in Surat in 1993, has been ordered by the British high court but still hasn't been completed.

"In extradition, the two important things are political will and following

procedures closely. In this case, the political will itself seems to be missing. It all boils down to properly following the letter of the law and the existing treaty. I think Modi's extradition is possible, but it's hard to say if it will actually happen," says senior Supreme Court advocate A.S. Chandiook.

So the big question really is, can the government break its extradition jinx with Britain and get Modi back to face the music? As a man who knows both the law and our leaders, the ever-brave former IPL chairman is confident it will not happen anytime soon.

Follow the writer on Twitter @_kunal_pradhan

Graphic by SAURABH SINGH



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FUTURE-READY

SHORN OF THE SHACKLES OF GOVERNMENT-AIDED INSTITUTIONS, PRIVATELY RUN UNI



UNIVERSITIES

VERSITIES ARE STEADILY STEALING A MARCH OVER THEM



By Amarnath K. Menon

The drift of bright students from seeking admissions in public universities to the privately run universities, a trickle in the early 2000s, is now a steady flow as the pan-India demand for higher education rises.

A number of private universities have emerged which are tuned into the needs of changing times and come equipped with state-of-the-art facilities, giving state-run universities a run for their students. The methods of teaching and the tools deployed are also going through a paradigm shift with cloud computing-based methods of study, wi-fi-enabled campuses, Skype conferences with faculty and teachers of universities abroad, and new and diverse curricula that imparts multi-skilling along with learning.

CONTENT IS THE CORE

For privately run universities, the priority is to offer courses relevant to job skills alongside traditional subjects. The Shiv Nadar University (SNU) in

Amity University, Noida

Founded in 2005

WHAT'S UNIQUE It claims to have filed over 607 patents in areas such as biotechnology, nanotechnology and IT. The campus boasts of facilities such as an Olympic-size swimming pool, indoor shooting range, horse riding academy, salon, free laundry service and a food court that houses branded eateries. A three-continent programme allows students to complete their last semester in the UK or US.

PRIVATE EDUCATION IN NUMBERS

India has 207 private universities compared to 45 central universities, 329 state universities and 128 deemed universities.

65 per cent of higher educational institutions, including colleges and technical education institutes, are in the private sector.

60 per cent of college-going students are enrolled in private institutions.

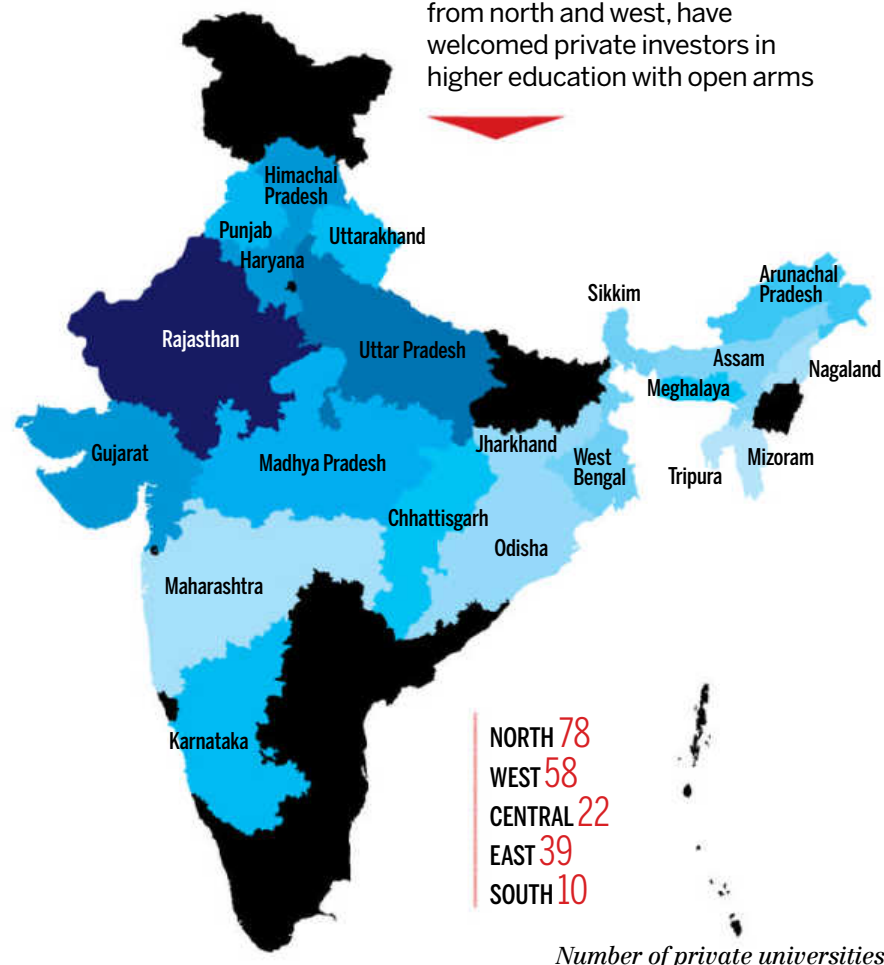
The Indian education industry was worth \$62.34 billion in 2013-14. By 2018, the size of the private education sector could be almost double of that—\$115 billion.

Between April 2000 and September 2014, the education sector in India received FDI worth \$964 million.



Teaching India

State governments, specially from north and west, have welcomed private investors in higher education with open arms



Greater Noida, founded in 2011, is characterised by its strong emphasis on interdisciplinary research, with centres such as the Centre for Public Affairs and Critical Theory, Big Data Analytics Centre, Centre for Emerging Societies and Centre for Informatics. With 14 undergraduate, 12 graduate and 13 doctoral programmes, there are presently four schools at the university—engineering, natural sciences, humanities and social sciences, and management and entrepreneurship. The undergraduate curriculum at SNU is designed such that it allows students to major in a particular subject while also studying and experimenting with a range of other minor and elective subjects. The key highlight of the curriculum is that it stresses upon the need for experiential learning and co-curricular activities with all students required to participate in some form of internship or service learning programme in addition to conducting research both within and outside the classroom or laboratory setting. “It provides them a real-world context for their learning,” explains its founding Vice Chancellor Nikhil Sinha.

The Galgotias University, Greater Noida, also founded in 2011, has carved a niche for itself through its industry-driven curriculum. Some of its schools have been formulated in collaboration



with reputed entities such as KPMG for the business school, Max Institute of Health Education & Research for the nursing school and IBM for the computing science school.

Since its inception in 2005, Amity University has grown rapidly beyond its first campus in Noida, Uttar Pradesh, to eight more universities in different states besides opening 10 international campuses and a full-fledged university in Dubai. It offers a vast range of courses, from actuarial science, applied science, architecture, design, and fashion to aerospace engineering, neuropsychology, solar engineering, forensic science and robotics. Soft skills such as foreign languages and business communication are added to every programme. "We believe that the foundation of a strong country is built on the pillars of science and technology, therefore we promote these domains. An Amity Science, Technology and Innovation Foundation has also been set up to support research," says Atul Chauhan, chancellor of Amity University. The university claims to have filed over 607 patents in areas such as biotechnology, nanotechnology and information technology.

The Kalasalingam University (KLU), Krishnankoil, Tamil Nadu, started in 1984 allows researchers

Kalasalingam University (KLU), Krishnankoil, Tamil Nadu Founded in 1984

WHAT'S UNIQUE It allows researchers the flexibility to even make changes in the syllabus if they find something new and interesting. It has a Student Information System through which all the students' academic requirements are made available to them, their parents and their local guardians. The faculty too can share information on this network.

in its laboratories the flexibility to even make changes in the syllabus if they find something new and interesting. Every semester, three to five students are sent to present papers at conferences abroad.

The Shri Ramswaroop Memorial University (SRMU), Lucknow, set up in 2012 by two IIT-Kanpur gold medalists, Pankaj Agarwal, its chancellor, and Pooja Agarwal, the pro-chancellor, runs six academic institutes in distinct streams such as technology, biotechnology and natural sciences offering more than 35 undergraduate, postgraduate, doctoral and interdisciplinary studies programmes.

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“We have introduced LabVIEW using advanced software to enable students and researchers to perform virtual experiments at the click of a button,” says Pankaj Agarwal.

For those focused on niche areas, private universities offer exclusive enrichment opportunities. At the Ajeenkya DY Patil University in Navi Mumbai, admirers of Dilip Chhabria of DC Design fame can learn from him

Galgotias University, Greater Noida Founded in 2011

WHAT'S UNIQUE To instil a sense of social responsibility, it makes students participate in activities such as free medical camps for the surrounding villages and free legal advice for villagers and undertrials in jail. Some of their schools have been formulated in collaboration with reputed entities such as KPMG, Max Institute of Health Education Research and IBM.

as he is a mentor of the DYPDC School of Design, which offers six courses in design and digital modelling. Students have to participate in building and testing prototype designs and undertake industry-oriented design projects as part of the curriculum. The programme is largely studio-based, which promotes research, experimentation, analysis and self-critique.

The Ashoka University in Sonapat, Haryana, founded by 40 philanthropists who pooled their thoughts, ideas, resources and responsibilities to create an institution unique in its approach to the liberal arts, has in 2014 opened a dedicated liberal arts college for undergraduate students. It offers an international module which transcends the boundaries between an arts and science education. “Our vision is to be one of the top universities in the world by 2025,” says Vineet Gupta, founder and pro vice chancellor, Ashoka University.

Students here are given the opportunity to explore a variety of subjects available in their first year before

they decide on their specialisation for the next two years. The flexible curriculum allows students to choose from different major courses—computer science, philosophy, economics, political science, English, psychology, history, mathematics, sociology and anthropology—in addition to 15 minor courses ranging from performing arts to international relations.

Similarly, with its focus on engineering and technology, the Manipal University Jaipur, established in 2011, is offering courses in mechatronics, automobiles, computers and communications. “Our aim is to increase domain knowledge to an extent that students make their own degrees,” says Sandeep Sancheti, president of the university. Students are even returned their mid-semester examination answer sheets to assess where they stand vis-a-vis their classmates.

ACCENT ON RESEARCH

Older ones such as the Sathyabama University, Chennai, set up in 1987, which offers courses in 24 branches of



CHANDRADEEP KUMAR



engineering each at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels, are striving to provide state-of-the-art facilities in engineering education and research. Its Centre for Waste Management, set up in association with the National Solid Waste Association of India, offers MSc in Energy Science, MTech in Green Engineering and Technology and several other courses. "The research centre focuses on handling and reusing waste with the help of innovative technology. We have a biodiesel plant with a 50-litre capacity that converts the cooking oil used in our mess into biodiesel to run two of our university buses," says the university Dean T. Sasipraba.

In 2014 the university set up a Rs 4-crore Centre of Excellence in Energy Research, where research on solar cells, fuel cells and bio energy is carried out. Sathyabama University has also exclusive centres for nanoscience and nanotechnology, climate change and ocean research. "We have a state-of-the-art martial science research facility, where new materials such as high temperature coatings, satellite applications and wear-resistant coatings are developed. Students and faculty members have designed and developed a satellite in association with ISRO which will be launched in March 2016. It will be used to monitor pollution and greenhouse gas emission in the Indian subcontinent," says Sasipraba.

STATE-OF-THE-ART FACILITIES

An added advantage for the newer universities is the opportunity to build and develop campuses with modern facilities. Take the case of the Brij Mohan Lall Munjal University (BMU), Gurgaon, founded in 2014, which has an innovatively designed campus. Designed by HOK, a US-based global design, architecture and urban planning firm, the campus has unique features such as new-age laboratories, a plush auditorium, multiple dining options and a gymnasium. It has also in place latest CNC (computer numerical control) machines for its students for practical training—which are way



CHANDRADEEP KUMAR

Mody University, Sikar, Rajasthan Founded in 1998

WHAT'S UNIQUE It has integrated courses such as BSc and Msc in biotechnology, BTech and MBA and diverse subjects such as export management, garment production, microbiology, nuclear science and technology, architecture and law. It also offers foreign language courses in Chinese, French, German, Japanese and Spanish.

ahead than what the industries are using—and the 3D printers at BMU are even used by companies for making prototypes.

SRMU in Lucknow has introduced an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)-based system with academic, finance and HR solutions to enable its administrators track everyone on campus round-the-clock. This ensures that every teacher uploads his lesson plan on the ERP system before taking the class and the attendance of students is recorded, a feature that has made the university a major attraction for parents.

KLU in Krishnankoil, Tamil Nadu, has an unique Student Information System (SIS) through which all the students' academic requirements are made available to them, their parents and their local guardians in one

database. This elaborate network lists students' performances semester-wise, with credits and attendance details on every course recorded, making reference a lot easier. "We believe in using technology to instil more effectiveness on the part of the teachers and simplify processes of learning for the students," says S. Saravana Sankar, vice chancellor, KLU.

Nitte University, which was granted deemed university status in 2008 after it was founded in 1999 as a medical college by the late Supreme Court judge and former Lok Sabha speaker K.S. Hegde at Deralakatte, Mangaluru, Karnataka, is on a different track. "We assign every student to a mentor, one of the teachers, who is not only responsible for his or her education but also social well-being. Slow learners in particular are given special attention," says M.S. Moodithaya, the university's registrar. An unusual teaching technique employed by the university has students going through textbooks available online, prepare presentations and upload them.

BOND WITH THE BEST

Many of the private universities opt for international collaborations and depute its faculty and students for short stints abroad to acquaint themselves with the latest tools and techniques in pedagogy.

Having the Imperial College London as its academic mentor,



BMU in Gurgaon got it to design the management school curriculum and send visiting faculty. It even offers the option to its MBA students to do one semester in London. "For undergraduates, we offer courses in association with KPMG, one of the top four accounting firms in the world, and for postgraduates, we offer MBA in business analytics in collaboration with IBM," says Amitava Mitra, dean, School of Engineering and Technology, BMU. The university has also recently signed a letter of intent with Fraunhofer, Europe's largest applied research organisation.

Galgotias has international collaborations with Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Goethe University, Purdue University, University of Maryland's Robert H. Smith School of Business and Anglia Ruskin University among others for exchange programmes. To instil a sense of social responsibility, it makes students participate in activities such as free medical check-ups for the surrounding villages through the school of nursing and free legal advice for villagers and undertrials in jail through the school of law.

KLU students are sent regularly on exchange programmes to institutions such as Soongsil University and Hannam University in Korea. In another tie-up with Tessolve, a

semiconductor engineering services company based in Bengaluru and Coimbatore, KLU faculty are trained by the company and students get to intern for a stipend during the third semester. The students are then evaluated jointly by Tessolve and KLU and qualified students are employed by the company.

Ashoka has partnered with King's College London, University of Pennsylvania, National University of Singapore, Yale University and several others for international exchange programmes where students can spend a summer or semester learning courses of their interest.

Other universities keep placement prospects in mind when preparing and updating syllabi. "We have considered what Nasscom and World Bank have stated in their reports on the issues of education and employability when designing courses," says Narayan Das Agrawal, chairman, GLA University, founded in 2010, in Mathura, Uttar Pradesh.

Students, eager to acquire new skills and pursue what they want to do in life, experiment in the choice of their course of study while these universities introduce innovative interdisciplinary courses that are also relevant to job market needs. Courses at these universities cost more when

Shri Ramswaroop Memorial University, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh Founded in 2012

WHAT'S UNIQUE It has introduced Enterprise Resource Planning, a computerised system which helps in audit of classroom education. Every teacher has to upload his lesson plan on the system before taking the class. It has also introduced LabVIEW, a software which enables students and researchers to perform virtual experiments.

compared to that at state-run universities, but to widen the opportunity these emerging universities offer scholarships and other incentives with a few offering grants ranging from 25 per cent to 100 per cent of the fees for economically challenged students.

What students want is to make the transition from university to workplace smooth, and private universities, with their market sensitivity, are increasingly becoming more effective enablers of this transition.

with Aditi Pai, Ashish Misra, Aravind Gowda, Karishma Goenka, Saranya Chakrapani, Rohit Parihar
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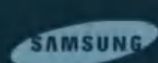
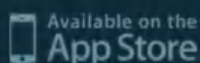


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RADHA ON THE TRANCE FLOOR

Is she a godwoman, a baby doll, a simple housewife, a scheming fraud or a power-hungry psycho? As allegations mount, Radhe Maa keeps all guessing.

By Damayanti Datta

Is your mobile phone on?" Before you can say "Radhe Maa", a woman snatches it from you: "Give it to me. Why is it so hot? Were you doing a sting?" Young men in red bandanas, guarding a short flight of stairs to a closed door—from cracks around which red light emanates—inch forward. Youths, standing near a coffee-vending machine, are suddenly closer to you than ever. Cell phones get confiscated, searched and checked. A humourless smile tips the corners of her mouth: "Mataji is sleeping. She did puja the whole night. No interview, no *darshan*. Have breakfast and just leave."

If all the world's a stage, Mumbai's Walkeshwar Road is where all the action is right now. At one end of the tony, tree-lined street—one of India's most expensive—resides Lord Shiva in his 888-year-old temple. At the other end, there is the so-called 'Durga incarnate', Mamtamai Shri Radhe Guru Maa in her palatial mansion, the White House. But in a cynical, suspicious world, the lines are getting blurred between the mythic and myth-making: is she, or is she not, an avatar, playing hide-and-seek with mere mortals?

"I hope you did not eat that breakfast," shrieks TV celebrity Dolly Bindra, who was in Maa's inner circle

between 2011 and 2013. She had gone in the hope of becoming a mother, she claims. The "cure" was: "Eat my *prasad*", or her leftovers (*jhoota*), Bindra alleges. "I was sexually tortured and targeted in the orgies that take place there, with people dancing to Bollywood music in the nude." Bindra, who complained to the police, claims that Radhe Maa lures people with the promise of making them rich: "But once you enter her gang, you can't come out. It's very dangerous. My mind was f****d. *Atma jhunjhuna gayi*." Radhe Maa's aides, however, dismiss the charges as baseless.

But #RadheMaa is trending on social media. Television cameras are tracking her relentlessly. Reporters are stalking her with a new purpose. A Pandora's box of toxic allegations are out: housewife Nikki Gupta alleges dowry harassment and torture; Sussex-educated lawyer Falguni Brahmabhatt has lodged a PIL for obscenity; advocate Ashok Rajput has filed a complaint for spreading superstition and black magic; Himachal priest Mahant Shyam Sundar Das is pointing a finger for financial irregularities, land grabbing and murder of her own guru, Ramadhin; the family of Maa's late sister-in-law has accused her of abetment to suicide and of life threats to them.

There is also the old allegation of

big-money corruption from the past: how she had become the first woman in the last 1,200 years to be the mahamandaleshwar (chief guardian) of the powerful Hindu akhara, Juna, in 2012. Thrown out within days, the allegations against her by the akhara committee remain: she bribed her way to the top, had not taken '*sanyas*' or renounced past life through *pinda daan*, has no knowledge of scriptures, and has not given up family life. What's more, her guru was a Vaishnavite while the Juna akhara worships Shiva.

August 17, Monday, 11 a.m. "Ask anyone where Radhe Maa is and they'll tell you." That's the promise from Sanjeev Gupta, the man who has dotted Mumbai with her posters. But outside her abode, there is not a soul in sight, no *bhakt* chanting her name, nothing. But so what? It's the '*leela*', stupid. A knock on the massive door and a side panel opens a crack. A man peeps out, a white hanky over his head, one eye twitching spasmodically: "You have an appointment?" He disappears. One can hear hectic whispering. Aeons pass. A cool sea breeze scatters gulmohar leaves. A heavy perfume—Dolce & Gabbana?—wafts in the air. The scent of spirituality? Yes, right there, behind you, there's her red bridal dupatta, on the backseat of a car—no, not her black Jaguar with red wheels, that hit the headlines for being

TRAPPINGS OF THE MODERN MATA What defines the mysterious Radhe Maa

TRIDENT

A foot-long metal mini-*trishul* in one hand and a rose in the other, that's her signature style. Allowed aboard flights sometimes for being "blunt", she wields it to bless as well as curse.



TUESDAY

The day dedicated to goddesses Durga and Kali is also her favourite day, say devotees. According to some, she does special pujas on this day and becomes "most powerful".



PRASAD

Can be anything she gifts someone, often from something she has received: money, clothes to gold. Strangely, she puts her spit on rose petals or sweets and distributes those as blessing too.





RADHE MAA

GETTY IMAGES

JAGUAR

She rides a black jaguar with bright red wheels. No, it's not registered in her name and is allegedly a gift from a *bhakt*. Unfortunately, it hit the headlines for being registered on a fake address.



SEAMSTRESS

Before becoming "Radhe Maa", she was Sukhwinder Kaur, a young mother of two who took to stitching and tailoring to supplement her husband's income.



SEVADARS

"Chhoti Maa" and "Talli Baba" are the only two disciples mentioned on Radhe Maa's official website. Talli Baba first screens a candidate wishing to contact Radhe Maa while Chhoti Maa is the final authority.



registered under a fake address—just a greyish non-controversial SUV.

The door opens into a lobby. There's a blood red imprint of Radhe Maa's feet on marble floor, encased in glass case and flowers. Chandeliers, mirrors and sleek white leather upholstery in an enormous hall form the backdrop. Upstairs, Maa lives in an urban cave, a '*gufa*', with red walls, red velvet bedspread studded with precious stones. Three people sit in the lobby, looking very sad. "What's their problem with her," says an elderly gentleman. "Don't mothers touch and kiss children?" The man with the handkerchief chokes with emotion as he describes how he first met Mata a decade back: "I saw on her face the exact image of my family *kula devi*." They talk about her teachings: "So simple and sweet. She says, just go and do *bhakti*. Like your bank balance, your *bhakti* should be full." She is like a child, they all agree: "Warm, open, giving everything to everyone." But right now the public scrutiny is making her scared: "So many people are now after her. We feel very hurt. God knows why it all started."

It all began with Rahul Mahajan, son of late BJP leader Pramod Mahajan. On August 5, he went on Twitter with a "Guess who ?????" and three pictures of Radhe Maa lolling around in a pink miniskirt, boots, beret and plastic bridal bangles upto her elbows. Ever since, the nation has been obsessing over her. It's not quite clear why. As devotee actor Rakhi Sawant says, "Why are people reacting like this? She's just a modern Mata, with a different style." Sawant had come out of her depression, thanks to her: "All charges are false. I love her. She is a miracle woman."

The nation can't have enough of a godwoman who is 50 but looks not a day over 30, dresses in fierce red, flaunts piles of diamonds, wears her shiny black hair in teenybopper bangs-and-bouffant style, sports a pancake face. So what if Naga sadhus go around stark naked, smoking *chillum*? The moment Maa sways to the tune of Bollywood—smiling, eyes closed, with *bhakts* chanting "*Bol Radhe Radhe*"—the nation

gets transfixed. Veteran filmmaker Subhash Ghai believes that Maa is being "misunderstood" for her "happy childish moods": "Her old devotees call her *Gudia* (baby doll) *Devi Ma*".

"It's nothing but a frenzy of witch hunt," says adman Prahlad Kakkar, the reason why even a non-believer like him has risen valiantly to Mamtamai's defence. "In logic and in law, there's nothing against her," says Kakkar. He has known her for just a year and a half, though. "I noticed her for her funny dress," he says, "as I kept bumping into her in lifts." Was that a coincidence, he wonders. As he became privy to her inner circle, he found her to be a "very warm human

ON AUGUST 5, RAHUL MAHAJAN TWEETED A "GUESS WHO???" AND PICTURES OF RADHE MAA IN A MINISKIRT. THE NATION WAS TRANSFIXED.



being" who spoke to him "without being a Maa". "She's actually a very simple housewife who has nobody to talk to." Most of her devotees are small-time business people, he points out, who believe that god is wealth. And she gives them hope: if you are good, god will give you wealth.

Falguni Brahmabhatt doesn't quite agree. "A whole lot of influential people of the business, entertainment and political worlds are fighting on her behalf," she says. "They are working hard to hush up the cases against her." That's because Maa's *modus operandi* involves celebrities: "They call celebrities for her events.

Then they advertise. People come for the stars." At every such occasion, she claims, "a lot of drama" takes place, people offer money, gifts, even gold, while she favours influential people with gifts or blessings. The Mamtamai Shree Radhe Guru Maa Charitable Trust, that organises so many events and collects so much money, is not even registered, Brahmabhatt has just found out through an RTI application.

No one really knows how she became a multimillionaire godwoman. But hers is the classic story of someone rising from rags to riches, with some grit and lots of imagination. Born and reared in penury in Gurdaspur, Punjab, Sukhwinder Kaur was bride to a sweet shop worker of Mukarian, Hoshiarpur, before she was out of her teens. By age 20, she was hard at work as a mother of two and a seamstress, to make both ends meet. She gravitated toward local *sat-sangs* of Mahant Ramadhin after her husband left her for the Gulf, in search of a better future. Her spiritual life took off when she got *diksha* at age 23.

Did she also get her first taste of power in the male-dominated world of spirituality? She did start dressing up in finery and calling herself a goddess from around this time. With some Hindu organisations objecting to her 'audacity', Sukhwinder moved to Delhi and finally to Mumbai. That was around 2003. How she met members of the Gupta family, owners of the 68-year-old confectionery, M.M. Mithaiwala, and impressed them enough to get refuge in their Borivali home are again questions that remain unanswered. But for the last 12 years, the Maa-Mithaiwala union has worked, with both experiencing "tremendous growth by the grace of God".

Meantime, Maa is quietly getting angry. Earlier, she would use her *mini-trishul* to surreptitiously comb her billowing hair during public events. But now she is threatening to destroy this hapless world with the swing of her trident: "*Mera trishul hilega to duniya hil jayegi*" (If my trishul moves, the world will be shaken). She is particularly angry with journalists, or "*totalog*" (parrot people). Beware of the fury of the devi. ■

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NAWAZUDDIN
SIDDIQUI

MEAN STREET STAR

Fifteen-plus years into a career marked by searing portrayals and unalloyed dedication to his craft, Nawazuddin Siddiqui comes into his own as Bollywood's hero next door

| By Suhani Singh |

Over a thousand kilometres away from Mumbai, Kirti Nigam, 23, has been waiting for over an hour in the lobby of Hotel Silvete in Lucknow for her favourite actor whom she fell for after watching him in *Gangs of Wasseypur II* (2012). With a bouquet of red roses in hand, she walks from one corner to the other. After a get-together with kids from G.D. Goenka Public School in Lucknow who, thanks to Mumbai's busy air traffic, stood for an hour in the assembly hall waiting for their Chand Nawab to meet them, Nawazuddin Siddiqui finally arrives at Silvete surrounded by four bouncers. They call themselves the Fantastic 4. He instantly recognises Nigam. Last year, she put on quite a show, crying profusely when she wasn't allowed to meet the man whose face she has emblazoned on a mug, a fan, her mobile phone cover and on the wall of her room in the form of a flex hoarding. "Aur kaisi ho?" he asks. Nigam turns red.

Siddiqui may not fit the popular perception of a Bollywood hero who goes to the gym to build his biceps and abs, but fans such as Nigam are proof that audiences are no longer being wooed by looks alone. Performance matters too. And Siddiqui always delivers. Known for excelling in supporting parts, be it in *Peepli [Live]* (2010), *Kahaani* (2012) and *The Lunchbox* (2013), Siddiqui has for long enjoyed a reputation for making his presence felt in ensemble films. He does so less by changing his physical appearance and more by getting into the head of his characters. That's why he is often seen as the character actor, the guy on the sidelines who draws viewers with his real performance. "He is extremely talented," says Reema Kagi, director of *Talaash*. "Whatever you give him, he will fly with it." In *Manjhi—the Mountain Man*, out on August 21, he won't be competing for attention. He will be the leading man.

The film, unlike his last two, *Badlapur* and *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*, is entirely perched on his shoulders. Siddiqui has had solo releases before such as *Patang* (2011) and *Miss Lovely* (2012) but they were more known for their festival than box office run and didn't have the publicity and marketing budgets of *Manjhi*. Siddiqui has embarked on an 11-city tour for the Ketan Mehta-directed film, getting mobbed by fans in Nagpur, Bhopal and Jaipur.

"This is the first time I'm doing a passionate love story," says Siddiqui, smiling shyly and drawing cheers from the students of IIM-Lucknow. Schoolkids request him to imitate the sinister laugh of the villain in *Kick* (2014), while the collegians want him to recite lines from *Gangs of Wasseypur II*, in which he played Faisal. Mohammed Tahir Khan, who missed a show of *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* at Wave cinemas, sees him as this generation's "Naseeruddin Shah who can draw audiences on the basis of his acting". Like Shah and more lately with Irrfan Khan, Siddiqui is also making a strong case that he is an artiste equally comfortable doing both independent and commercial films. Like them he has a National Award—albeit a Special Jury Award—but unlike them he can also boast of featuring in Hindi cinema's second and third highest earners. "The kind of frenzy Nawaz is generating shows that the audience is really attached to him," says Mehta. "When they see him, they are like 'Yeh apna banda hai, kisika beta yaa saala nahin

(He is our guy. He is nobody's son or nephew).'" Adds director Sriram Raghavan, "I watched *Badlapur* at Mumbai's Gaiety cinema and was zapped by the audience response. People loved him though they are supposed to hate him."

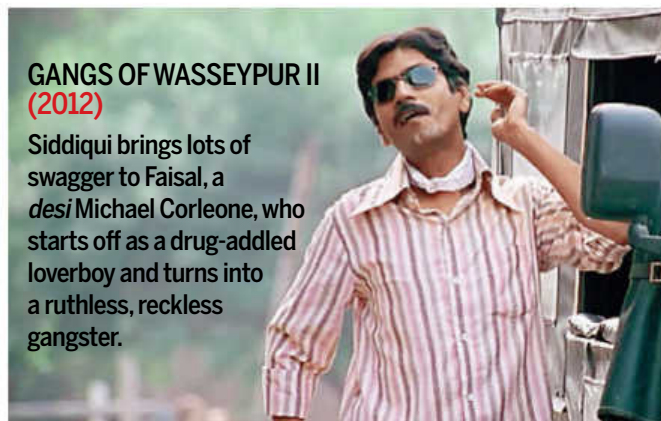
Throughout the promotions of *Manjhi* including in Lucknow, Siddiqui often repeats how Dashrath Manjhi—on whom the film is based—and he have a lot in common. The former, devastated by his wife's death, devoted 22 years to break a mountain in Bihar so that

"HE MAKES LIFE EASIER FOR THE DIRECTOR. HE MAKES THE CHARACTERS FAR SUPERIOR TO WHAT YOU HAVE ENVISIONED."

SUJOY GHOSH
Director, *Kahaani*

THE SUPER SIX

Performances the audience can't stop raving about



GANGS OF WASSEYPUR II (2012)

Siddiqui brings lots of swagger to Faisal, a *desi* Michael Corleone, who starts off as a drug-addled loverboy and turns into a ruthless, reckless gangster.



KAHAANI (2012)

'Don't mess with Siddiqui' is the message as he plays the daunting Intelligence Bureau officer in Sujoy Ghosh's thriller.

MISS LOVELY (2012)

A fool in love and an aspiring C-grade filmmaker in 1980s Bombay, Siddiqui is at his dramatic best in this National Award-winning film.



his village would have easier access to water. Meanwhile, Siddiqui never gave up on his dream to be an actor after starting out with bit roles such as that of a waiter in *Shool* (1999) and a pickpocket in *Munna Bhai M.B.B.S.* (2003). The big break came with releases such as *New York* (2009) and *Gangs of Wasseyapur II*; after 10 years in Mumbai, most of which he spent hanging around on sets and waiting outside studios to meet the director, his assistant or the writer, anyone who could give him a chance. "*Manjhi* is about the triumph of the human will, making the impossible possible and believing in yourself," says Mehta to the kids at the Goenka school. Words that can describe Siddiqui's career too.

The 41-year-old has battled to get noticed much like his character in Dibakar Banerjee's short *Star in Bombay Talkies* (2013). "I was realistic. I knew no one was waiting here for me. What had I done?" he says about his difficult formative years in Mumbai. "But I had many encounters with (struggling) actors who were very good but sank into depression and cynicism. I knew I had to protect myself mentally." He kept himself busy, be it short film or doing acting workshops. The bar set was practical and realistic. "Do whatever small part you do, but do it with honesty and the results may not be immediate but they will arrive," said Siddiqui to kids in Lucknow recapping his career.

Born in Budhana, Muzaffarnagar, to a farmer, Siddiqui is the eldest of nine siblings—seven brothers and two sisters. There the only cinema he was exposed to was the C-grade semi-porn variety, the sort that his character Sonu Daggal makes in *Miss Lovely*. "He grew up never knowing what he wanted to do with his life," says his filmmaker-brother Shamas, who has been by his side in Mumbai for 11 years now and dons the role of manager. It explains Siddiqui's early life as a wanderer in search of his destiny. After finishing his matriculation, he left for Haridwar,

where he graduated in science from the Gurukul Kangri University. Having seen a play and moved by the audience-viewer dynamic, he settled on acting. "*Yeh pure cheez hai, isme koyi corruption nahi hai* (It is a pure art. There is no corruption in it.) If you are able, then you will flourish," he said in Lucknow about why he took up acting. He moved to Vadodara for a year to pursue performing arts at MS University and also worked as a chemist in a lab. Next was a year-and-a-half-long stint in Lucknow at the renowned Bhartendu Natya Akademi. But it was in 1993 when he moved to Delhi to pursue acting at the National School of Drama (NSD) that stability set in.

At NSD, says batchmate Geetanjali Kulkarni who starred in the National Award-winning *Court*, he was known for improvising and making an impact in the smallest of roles. "He had a weird sense of humour which I see in his performances even today," she says. Remembering his days at NSD, Siddiqui says, "I was in a group of four to five boys who never succeeded in getting girlfriends." But being unlucky in love meant that he had additional time to focus on acting. "NSD helps you to find out what you are. You learn a lot about your positives and weaknesses." Thereafter he spent two years doing street plays in Delhi. Seeing NSD alumni in films such as Shekhar Kapur's *Bandit Queen* inspired Siddiqui to head to Mumbai in 1999. He found space under the roof of batchmate Puneet Trivedi in an apartment near Aarey Milk Colony which he shared with four others.

Siddiqui's first part, a 40-second appearance in *Sarfarosh* (1999), was pure luck. The makers had wanted his batchmate Nirmal Das but couldn't locate him. But it wouldn't turn his fortunes around. It'd only be with the small but dramatically pertinent part in Anurag Kashyap's *Black Friday* (2004), which in turn would help him land his first lead role in Prashant Bhargava's *Patang* in 2007, that he'd register with the film fraternity. "Even today I will do anything for him (Kashyap)," says Siddiqui about the



THE LUNCHBOX (2013)

The annoying becomes endearing as his character tries to make the aloof Saajan Fernandes (Irrfan Khan) live and love a little.



KICK (2014)

Portrays a baddie with such glee that viewers can't help but root for him.

BAJRANGI BHAIIJAAN (2015)

Audiences cheer and applaud as Siddiqui's amiable Pakistani journalist Chand Nawab makes an entry, a sign of his growing popularity among the masses.



director whom he met on the sets of *Shool*. "His opinion along with (producer-director) Sajid Nadiadwala's really matters to me." Siddiqui and Shamas have also never forgotten Kashyap's advice: "An actor is like a flower, protect him and don't let him fly away."

No wonder then that the descriptors "down to earth" and "simple" are repeatedly heard while talking about Siddiqui in Lucknow. "Throwing tantrums and wearing a fancy suit won't make me a better actor, so I don't do that," said Siddiqui to much approval from the IIMites. His phones and even some clothes are hand-me-downs from his brother. Siddiqui is the sort of actor who is content with carrying one black suit to Cannes. Sanah Kewal, his make-up artist for over two and half years, talks of how he treats his staff—which includes manager Aditi, spot Deepak and driver Ashok—like family. "I have learned so much in life from him—being patient and never losing your cool," she says. Siddiqui admits that he doesn't know how much money he has in his account. "Ashok will know more about it than I do," he says. While he has an office on Yari Road in Versova, Mumbai, he still lives on rent in the same neighbourhood. Last year he spent his savings to retrieve the farmland which his father lost in Budhana. His mother and three brothers still live there. "He doesn't have many demands from life," says Shamas.

This ordinary approach to life resonates with people. Travelling on the same Lucknow-bound flight as Siddiqui, Fatehpur-born Rajshri Rani Pandey, leading lady of Zee TV show *Suhani Si Ek Ladki*, says, "His success makes you happy because it's like one of us has made it. He acts from the heart. There are good-looking, handsome heroes but the real-life hero looks like Nawazuddin."

If that's the way he is perceived, then Siddiqui has

succeeded in his mission. "People have always thought of a hero as someone who is always perfect," he says. "I want the audience to like someone who is like a real human being, full of weaknesses and also positives." After 15 years in the industry, the rewards are coming in. He will next be seen with Shah Rukh Khan in *Raees*, which will make him one of the few actors to have worked with the SuperKhan troika. Sujoy Ghosh is developing a film with him and Amitabh Bachchan. Even the money's getting better. In 2013, he signed *Haraamkhor* for Rs 1 lakh. The same day he signed another project for Rs 1 crore, he says. A film is a film for him, whether it is a small one with a newcomer or a star-driven project with a big banner. "I won't do any film just because it has a big actor and it will get a wide release," he says. "I need to have a challenging character."

"IT'S NO LONGER ABOUT NICHE AND MAINSTREAM. HIS PRESENCE IN THE FILM TAKES THE STOCK OF THE FILM HIGHER."

KABIR KHAN

Director, New York and Bajrangi Bhaijaan

Having finally found his feet in Bollywood, Siddiqui, like Irrfan Khan, is also looking at Hollywood. An international festival run and release for Ritesh Batra's *The Lunchbox* ensured that Siddiqui got eyeballs. Soon he will be seen in *Lion*, which stars Nicole Kidman and Dev Patel. It's a small part of a cop but then the length of a role has never deterred Siddiqui from pursuing his passion.

With the tour of his home state done, Siddiqui is looking forward to home in Mumbai. Some time can be spent with four-year-old daughter Shora. He and his wife, Anjali, recently welcomed a son, Yaani, named after the pianist. But before all of that, there is Nigam once again. Travelling 20 km on her two-wheeler, she has been waiting since 5 a.m. to say goodbye to her hero. "All these people who are following him after *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* are not true fans," she says. "I'm fan number one." She takes one last photo—this time a selfie. She knows he will be back. He is a star, finally.

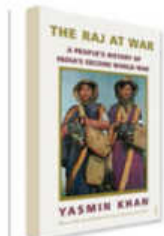
Follow the writer on Twitter @suhani84

BATTLE CRIES AND WHISPERS

Yasmin Khan's book tells the Indian story of the Second World War from the bottom up and how it led to famine and freedom



By Vedica Kant



The Raj at War: A People's History of India's Second World War
by Yasmin Khan
Vintage
Pages 432
Price Rs 699

At the beginning of her exhaustive book, *The Raj at War*, Yasmin Khan says: "Britain did not fight the Second World War, the British Empire did." This is an important reminder despite the fact that, as Khan herself admits, it is no longer true to suggest that the imperial contribution to the war is a totally forgotten story. The centenary of the First World War, in which more than 1.5 million troops from undivided India took part, has only helped increase awareness, in both Britain and in India, about the ways in which the two World Wars were South Asia's as well.

The Indian Army during the Second World War was at the time the largest volunteer army in history. Some 2.5 million Indians joined the war, at least 100,000 were killed or injured. The numbers are startling,

but Khan's book aims to look beyond just the numbers of the military and economic contribution of the Raj to the war effort.

The Raj at War is more focused on telling history from the bottom up. The big figures—Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Subhas Chandra Bose—feature too, but high politics unfolds in the background as Khan focuses on what was happening at the ground level. Khan's focus is on understanding the underlying ways in which the war shaped the Indian subcontinent itself. In doing so she tells the story not just of the infantryman or officer of the Indian Army but also of the other men and women who propped up the Indian Army's war effort—the non-combatants, camp followers, lascars, prostitutes, nurses, refugees and peasants, to name just a few. But beyond those involved in the minutiae of war, the book also looks at those Indians away from the army who also experienced and were impacted by the war. These were merchants, industrialists, seamen, agriculturists, black marketeers, people in small towns and big cities, interned Europeans,

American GIs—all of whom had to negotiate the war.

It is a lot of ground to cover and the book is dense with detail. If there is one criticism of the book, it is with the structure and layout of the chapters. The chapter headings give no clue of the details they contain and include no subheadings. If it's a criticism, it is only because the book contains a wealth of material that should be easier to reference. Despite this drawback, Khan's prose—crisp and clear—hugely aid the reader navigate the breadth of material she draws on for the book.

In assessing the impact of the war, Khan starts with the military but also looks at how social and political changes were driven by the events and conditions of the war years.

Army recruiters went into action as soon as the war was declared. It was not an uphill battle initially to get men to sign up with promises of regular food and wages. Middle-class Indians, unlike in the First World War, had the opportunity to fight as officers. The impact of this proximity with the British officer classes, the change in the composition of the army and slow-changing institutional



GETTY IMAGES

INDIAN SOLDIERS ARRIVE IN ENGLAND TO TAKE PART IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR

the Japanese army in the Indian Ocean and the German armies in the Middle East, India becomes the centre of the war." Even the tea plantations in the east of India were no longer remote, falling as they did squarely in the path of a Japanese advance. Khan describes how tea plantation workers were employed to build escape roads to the west in exacting weather conditions even though they had no experience of construction. Perhaps the worst outcome of the Japanese advance was the government policy in 1942 of destroying rice stocks and boats in coastal Bengal in advance of a possible invasion. On Winston Churchill's orders only those directly involved in the war effort were to be fed. The indifference marked the onset of the Bengal famine. Khan recounts how the victims displayed "hollow eyes in sockets, skin like paper. The dead and the dying were now sometimes indistinguishable".

and racial biases (it was only halfway through the war that Indian officers could sit on court martials of British soldiers) was to unfold over the course of the war and impact the future of the Indian state as well.

At the same time, the war economy boomed, providing opportunities for sections of the population—women especially—to now join the workforce. For India's businessmen, the war gave an opportunity to further their huge fortunes by providing military supplies. Khan writes: "Cities such as Karachi and Bangalore boomed, the infrastructure of airlines, companies and road networks were laid by wartime projects, and consumer imports from tinned food to fridges came onto the market... Middle-class women found new freedoms in work and activism. Nehru's planned economy and the welfare-orientated developmental state that he tried to craft after 1947 had its roots in the Raj's transformation of the 1940s."

The intensity of action the Indian subcontinent saw during the war is somewhat forgotten today but it is worth remembering George Orwell's words in the aftermath of the attack on Pearl Harbour: "With

The famine was only another reminder of what had already become clear—British rule in India was no longer tenable. The Quit India movement had taken a shape of its own, even with most of the Congress top brass in prison. By the end of the war, as uncertainty over the country's future loomed, unrest spread. Demobilised soldiers began re-evaluating their allegiances. As one Indian sailor who mutinied in 1946 put it: "I was 22. I had come through a war unscathed—a war fought to end Nazi domination. I began to ask myself questions. What right had the British to rule over our country?"

For the post-colonial South Asian states, the Second World War is often forgotten in the face of the landmarks of Independence and the trauma of Partition. Khan's book is an important reminder of how closely entwined the war years were with those events and how crucial they were in shaping the future of the countries born of the Raj.

Vedica Kant is the author of If I die here, who will remember me?: India and the First World War

TIME FOR CRIME

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE WAITING FOR GOOD CRIME FICTION. HERE ARE THE ONES YOU SHOULD GET READY FOR.



THE GIRL IN THE SPIDER'S WEB:
A LISBETH SALANDER NOVEL
by David Lagercrantz
Release September 1

► Remember the girl with the dragon tattoo? Lisbeth Salander, the genius hacker, and David Blomkvist, the crusading journalist, return as David Lagercrantz continues with Stieg Larsson's bestselling Millennium series.



MAKE ME
by Lee Child
Release September 8

► It is the 20th Jack Reacher thriller. He gets out on a railroad stop and wants to know something: Why is this town called Mother's Rest? With Michelle Chang, he starts exploring this tiny place hidden in wheat fields. And what he comes across ain't pretty. Shall we just forget Harold Pinter who once said that he did not understand the mentality of someone who is keenly awaiting the next Lee Child?



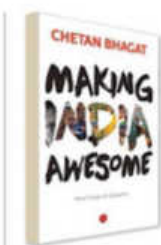
EVEN DOGS IN THE WILD
by Ian Rankin
Release November 5

► Fans of John Rebus, rejoice. He is back. A lawyer is found dead, with a threatening note. Edinburgh's crime boss Big Ger Cafferty also gets a threatening letter. Detective Inspector Siobhan Clarke pulls Rebus out of retirement to investigate. But, people, you will have to read the e-book. The hardback will take a few more months.

THE HALF-PHILOSOPHER

Chetan Bhagat's solutions to India's problems are well-meaning but naïve, even problematic

By Shivam Vij



Making India Awesome
by Chetan Bhagat
Rupa
Pages 192
Price Rs 176

Chetan Bhagat today is much more than India's best-selling writer of popular fiction. He is seen to represent the youth of "middle India", that place between the village and the global metropolis.

Bhagat takes that role seriously, travelling across India as a motivational speaker and writing columns. The biographical note in this book says he quit his banker job to write and to "make change happen in the country".

In 2012, Bhagat published his first non-fiction book, *What Young India Wants*, an anthology of his newspaper columns. This book is the second such anthology, though it carries no acknowledgement that these are previously published articles. When *What Young India Wants* came out, I met Bhagat on a TV show where he told me the book was selling more than his novels, something he wasn't happy about.

Like Bollywood, Bhagat believes in being ahead of the curve. As a result, he comes across as an avant-garde intellectual who defines the times, instead of being led by them. Between 2012 and 2014, Bhagat had not-so-subtly begun to endorse Narendra Modi. In this book, he has declared that his hopes have turned into despair.

He divides Indians into three categories, making Justice Katju-like precise counts of each: 80 per cent are "Self-focused Indifferent Indians", 16 per cent are "Caring but Aligned Indians" and just 4 per cent are "Caring Objective Indians". Bhagat himself is in the top 4 per cent,

and you could get there, he suggests, if you pick up this book.

The purpose of this formulation is to say that Bhagat isn't sold to Modi or the BJP for life. He isn't "aligned" but "objective". This also answers the charge that people like him are "fence-sitters, opportunists, or indecisive, confused, contradictory or weak".

The "ebbing Modi wave", Bhagat writes, is symptomatic of the "hope and disappointment cycle", the way out of which is a shift in "societal values, culture and habits". This will make India awesome—a term Bhagat wants taken seriously. So we have "awesome governance", "awesome society", "awesome equality" and so on.

The trouble with this guru-speak is that Bhagat's solutions are actually very banal and unoriginal. He tells Modi to learn from the Delhi election results. The Congress should delegate power. We should stop seeing fair skin as superior. Women should stand up for property rights. We should get rid of the politics of caste and religion to

integrate with the world. We should build low-cost housing for the urban poor. And so on.

There is nothing here that your neighbourhood uncleji doesn't tell you in the park. Like the neighbourhood uncleji, Bhagat is well-meaning but naïve, and often ends up saying some very problematic things. He chides the "educated middle class" for thinking that low-caste and Muslim voters are foolish to vote for corrupt politicians, thus presuming that the "educated middle class" is not a beneficiary of corruption. The oppressed, he writes, vote for the corrupt because they have other priorities such as identity and safety. This is their revenge upon the rest of us.

He chides Indian men who don't marry working women. Indian men should marry working women for five reasons, only the fifth of which has to do with her being happy. The first four are that you'll be able to discuss your career with her, she'll bring home money, she will bring back knowledge and information of the world that will help the family, and the children will be more independent.

He writes about women, Muslims and the subaltern castes with their best interests in mind, but without realising how he is othering them. His voice is that of the educated middle class, which is casteless and pure of corruption.

The saving grace is that his heart is in the right place. It is important that a writer as widely read as Bhagat tells men to see women as human beings, or argues for decriminalisation of homosexuality.

If Chetan Bhagat was trying to make India awesome 20 years ago, he would have been a fervent writer of letters to the editor. For all its flaws, this is an important book to read if you haven't already read it in instalments.

Shivam Vij is a journalist

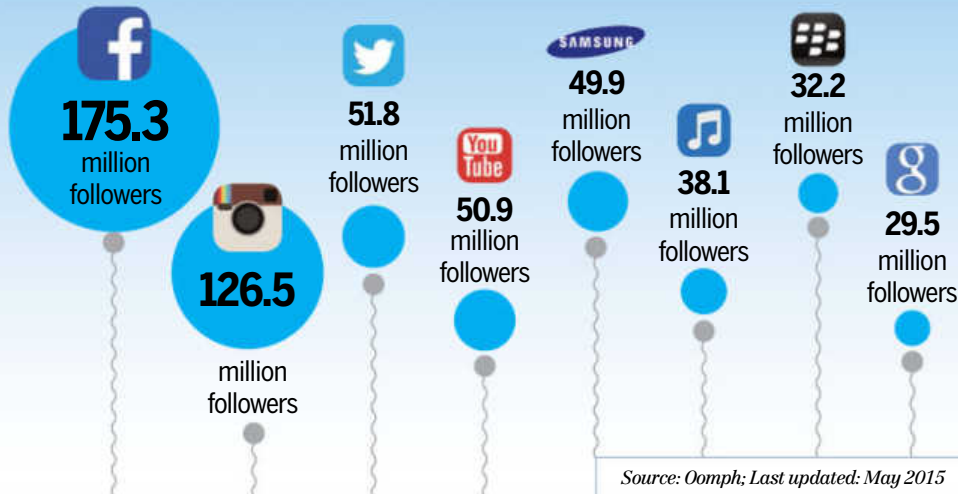


Illustration by SAURABH SINGH

Graphic by NAOREM SANJOY SINGH

SOCIAL CAPITAL

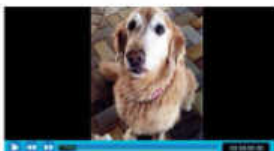
Tech giants have a fan following, but how many of them are actually followed on social media? Here are those that have the highest number of fans on various social networks:



→ viral video



A boy annoying his sister on a seven-hour-long road trip by singing continuously amused 2.4 million.



A dog's reaction on learning she is cancer-free touched 1.2 million people.



A man singing while undergoing brain surgery astonished a million people.

→ web wow

Song of Equality



Over 100,000 people were moved by transgenders singing the national anthem on India's 69th Independence Day. Made by Yathartha Pictures in celebration of a 2014 Supreme Court ruling that recognised them as a gender with rights, the video depicts transgenders dressed as a teacher, doctor, lawyer, alluding to their future professional aspirations.

→ twitter tattle



Taj Mahal @TajMahal
The official Twitter handle of the World's most Loved Monument, located in Agra, Uttar Pradesh, India. One of the wonders of the World.
Agra, Uttar Pradesh
upstourism.gov.in

Wah Taj!

The Taj Mahal is officially the first Indian historic monument with a Twitter account and already has 13,000 followers. Uttar Pradesh CM Akhilesh Yadav launched @TajMahal and soon netizens shared pictures and memories of visiting the monument with the hashtag #MyTajMemory.

→ net fail

Flaw Finder



While preparing for an internship at Facebook, Indian-origin Harvard student Aran Khanna came across a big privacy flaw in the social media's messenger service. However, instead of informing the company, he published an article about it. Needless to say, his internship offer was revoked.

→ web lol

What's in a letter?

Google's former CEO Larry Page launched its new holding company, Alphabet, and even bought the domain name abc.xyz. The Web responded to the silly name with humour, and decided to buy domain names abc.wtf and abc.fail and direct the pages to Google's biggest competitor—Bing.



→ pixel perfect

Changing Shapes

A UK-based pharmaceutical company conducted an experiment called Perceptions of Perfection. Designers in 18 countries were given the task of photoshopping the image of a woman based on the beauty standards of their respective nations. The results were varied and interesting.



Follow the writer on Twitter @lkummi

→ what's new

App Alert



Notability helps you take written, audio and video notes.



MSTY lets users communicate with song clips.



FUNNY HA HA

The nation has a sense of humour



JAB WE MET

Amid all the heavy-weather politics over Lalit Modi and Sushma Swaraj, a Facebook page called 100crorefilms, which (re)creates posters of films it believes were inspired by politicians, has this gem of a poster for Imtiaz Ali's 2007 rom com, *Jab We Met*.



RICKSHAW RUN

From Shillong to Kochi, 83 teams from 23 countries went for a cross-country ride of 3,500 km in richly decorated autorickshaws. No adventure game but the real stuff, organised by The League of Adventurists, a UK-based company.

SOMETIMES, JUST SOMETIMES, THE UBIQUITOUS FLIP-FLOPS—

Finance Minister **Arun Jaitley** presented his budget in Parliament dressed in a Modi jacket over a shirt, trousers and sandals.



A murder convict, **Manjunath**, walked out of the Central Prison in Bengaluru by carving out a fake visitors' seal out of his rubber flip-flops.



FEBRUARY

Chappals for All Seasons

AUGUST



Remember the "suit-boot *ki sarkar*" jibe from **Rahul Gandhi** against PM Modi? Rahul has now extended his vision for the common man during a visit to Amethi. "We want your *sarkar*. Shirt *ki sarkar*, chappal *ki sarkar*."

Maharashtra Women and Child Welfare Minister **Pankaja Munde** took her slippers off on a muddy tract in Sonpeth and asked a man—her personal aide and not a public servant, she claimed—to carry them.

"You'll find life is still worthwhile if you'll just smile"

Charlie Chaplin's *The Tramp*—featuring the "little fellow" in baggy pants and a bowler hat who smiles when he should be crying—completed 100 years this year. How has the tramp inspired Bollywood?



-KOLHAPURI, HAWAI OR LEATHER—CAN BECOME A TALKING POINT



The infamous Bihar MP **Pappu Yadav** allegedly manhandled an airhostess, threatened to beat her with *chappals* onboard a Patna-Delhi Jet Airways flight.

APRIL



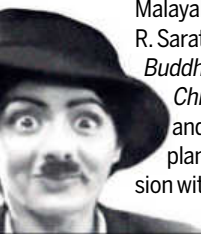
JULY

West Bengal Chief Minister **Mamata Banerjee** spent four days in London, at the St James's Court, a Taj hotel, checking out the city in her free time, walking by the River Thames or to Hyde Park, in her *chappals*.

The beautiful **Deepika Padukone** said she often goes to the sets in jeans and a T-shirt with *chappals*. For *Piku*, director Shoojit Sircar asked her to shoot just like that, to keep it real.



1. Actress **Vidya Balan's** dream to play Chaplin is set to come true. Malayalam film director R. Sarath, who made *Buddhanum Chaplinum Chirikkunnu* (Buddha and Chaplin Smile), is planning a Hindi version with Vidya in the lead.



2. **Asrani** as a jailor in *Sholay* (1975) is clearly inspired by Chaplin's *The Great Dictator* (1940).

3. 'Mera Joota Hai Japaani,' sang **Raj Kapoor** in *Shree 420* (1955), a country boy at odds with the world. The desi tramp made a comeback in his film *Mera Naam Joker* (1970).

4. **Ranbir Kapoor's** memorable Chaplin-esque act in *Ajab Prem ki Gazab Kahani* (2009) was a hit.

5. Unexpected but a great hit: **Sridevi** in Shekhar Kapoor's *Mr India* (1987).



MEN WATCHING

What's new out there for the well-dressed fashionable man



Sneakers are no longer just a casual footwear. They are dominating designer collections globally. Style gurus' advice: go for all-white leather trainers—for dressing up, down and everything in-between.



A new variant of tea, **Man Tea**, is taking the men's world by storm. It's a new concoction from China with a healthy dose of jiaogulan, the 'immortality herb' with power to rejuvenate the body, combat stress and improve cardiovascular health.



For watch-lovers, here's a stylish hand-wound Swiss-made watch: **Master Ultra Thin Squelette** by Jaeger-LeCoultre. It is the thinnest mechanical watch in the world. Such thinness comes at \$58,500 (Rs 38.3 lakh approx).

EYECATCHERS

COMIC TIMING

YouTube is suddenly just a big laugh and a short hop away from Bollywood. **Richa Chadda** joins a growing number of actors such as Alia Bhatt, Irrfan Khan and Ranveer Singh who are willing to make fun of themselves to amuse viewers online. The *Masaan* actor will soon be seen alongside Kanan Gill and Biswa Kalyan Rath, who are best known for their hilarious 'Pretentious Movie Reviews'. The video will see Chadda giving tips on method acting.

RAJWANT RAWAT



SWISS SUCCESS

India's eight-year-long dry run at the Locarno International Film Festival ended when Bengaluru-based filmmaker **Raam Reddy's** Kannada film *Thithi* was selected for competition. On Independence Day, Reddy did India proud when his film, starring amateur actors, won two awards: the top prize in the section Concorso Cineasti del Presente (Filmmakers of the Present) and the Swatch First Feature award.

HOW WAS THE WEEK?



GOOD

Anirban Lahiri

The golfer finished fifth at the PGA Championship, the best performance by an Indian at a major.



BAD

Srikanth Kidambi

Seeded three, the shuttler had a poor show at the World Badminton Championship, losing in round three.

GOOD TURN



One of the leading ladies of small screen, **Sakshi Tanwar's** transition to the big screen has not been successful as the release of the controversial *Mohalla Assi* got delayed. But Tanwar has now got a part in *Dangal* that may do wonders for her career. She will be playing the wife of a bulky Aamir Khan.

DRUM ROLL

In a first of sorts, the Symphony Orchestra of India has roped in celebrated percussionist **Zakir Hussain** to compose a concerto that makes use of the tabla, among other instruments. Titled *Peshkar*, it will premiere in Mumbai in September and tour Switzerland in January.



DELIGHTFUL WAG

Kiara Advani will play M.S. Dhoni's wife Sakshi in the biopic of the cricketer. Sushant Singh Rajput will play captain cool Dhoni in Neeraj Pandey's film. Advani, whose debut *Fugly* got an ugly reception at the box office, will be hoping this one hits the century mark at the box office.

■ Compiled by **Suhani Singh** Follow the writer on Twitter @suhani84

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MAKING A DIFFERENCE

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(LEFT) AND MAHAK MALIK,
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Photograph by DANESH JASSAWALA

COVER STORY

Mending Mumbai **s-4**
Meet these young Mumbaiites in the city, who are bringing about a change.

CITY BUZZ

Into the city **s-11**
A checklist on what to do and where to eat.

Cover photo by DANESH JASSAWALA

OUR PICK of the month

Screened Exhibitions

August 31

Widely loved artists such as Vincent Van Gogh, Johannes Vermeer, Edouard Manet, Matisse and Rembrandt are finding their way to Mumbai. The artists' works are going to be exhibited in the city through five documentary screenings at the NCPA all through August and September.

At Godrej Dance Theatre,
NCPA Timings 6.30 p.m.
Website ncpamumbai.com/buy-tickets



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Cover Story

MENDING MUMBAI

MEET THESE YOUNG MUMBAI-
ITES IN THE CITY, WHO ARE
BRINGING ABOUT A CHANGE

By MOEENA HALIM





ENVIRONMENT TO EDUCATION

Azad Patel, 25, *Ek Ehsaas Ek Vishwas Foundation*

From fighting mangrove devastation in northern Mumbai, to organising plantation drives, setting up anganwadi schools and making sure the children attend them, Azad Patel has done much to bring about social change in the city.

The Beginnings Patel was only eight when he realised how privileged he was. "I was in boarding school in Kolkata and there we'd often spot children from the nearby basti watching us. They had no toys or books," he recalls. By collecting two rupees from everyone at school, he managed to collect over Rs 10,000 with which he bought them study equipments. This was just the beginning of his philanthropy. Today, he runs four small anganwadi-style schools and is gearing up to set up a residential school in Virar.

The Impact He set up the first school when he was still studying in the 11th standard. "I'd go there every day before college. At first, I had to bribe them with Parle G packets to lure them to the school, but slowly they started enjoying themselves. From the initial 10-20 kids, we now have 100 kids with us," he says with pride.

Website eeevfoundation.org

Photograph by DANESH JASSAWALA



Photograph by DANESH JASSAWALA

COLOURING LIVES

Himanshu S, 34, Aqvi Thami, 25, Dharavi Art Room Foundation

Dharavi Art Room is a space maintained by Himanshu S and Aqvi Thami, meant for the use of Dharavi's children to express themselves freely through the medium of the arts.

The Beginning Himanshu, who attended JJ School of Arts, has been no stranger to Dharavi. "I had a friend who lived in the Matunga Labour Camp and that's how I first began visiting the area in the late 1990s," he recalls. Affected by what he saw there, Himanshu began volunteering with various organisations. He found that art helped the children express themselves openly and that's when he knew he wanted to provide them with greater access to resources as well as a safe space for them to spend their time. "Even if they don't paint or draw, the children can now borrow from the library here, they can play some music or dabble with photography,"

reveals Himanshu. About 300 children visit the art room over the week and Himanshu has found that the children, who often come from troubled homes, find it safe to open up and share stories of their life—good or bad—with others in class.

The Future When Aqvi Thami, a trained social worker pursuing her PhD at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, joined Himanshu, their programme began expanding to include sex education and gender issues. They also ran a photography class with the women of Dharavi, who were otherwise restricted to domestic life. Himanshu makes sure the children's works are taken to wide audiences. He hosts regular exhibitions and publishes their work. "By the end of this year, we hope to replicate the art rooms in Mankhurd and Malwani too," he reveals.

Website artroom.strikingly.com

MAKING DREAMS COME TRUE

Bani Das, 33, Robin Chaurasia, 30, *Kranti*

At Kranti, Bani Das and Robin Chaurasia empower young girls, daughters of sex workers from Kamathipura, by providing them a home, nurturing their talents and helping them follow their passions.

The Beginning While working at an NGO in Kamathipura, where minor girls were rescued and rehabilitated, Das realised how bleak the girls' future was. "The girls had been rescued but they were shut in at home, watching television and running small cottage industries. Those early teenage years are so crucial, there was so much the girls could do, but there was no one to nurture their dreams," recalls Das. When she met Chaurasia, who volunteered at the same NGO, the two discussed this problem and a few years down the line, Kranti was born in 2010. In Grant Road, the NGOs often ask older girls who've passed their matriculation or reached adulthood to leave. "We take in these girls and others who don't know what to do or where to go.

They may have the education but sometimes lack the strength and support to follow their dreams," says Das.

The Impact Rather than focussing on academic success, at Kranti the girls aged between 12 and 21 are pushed to pursue various arts, sports and other activities. "Of course, they attend school and college, but it is mandatory to take up extra-curricular activities too," she explains. That's how 19-year-old Sheetal Jain learnt that she loved to play the drums and was actually pretty good at it. She got a scholarship to study in the US and will now head to Hyderabad to pursue a two-year course studying to master the instrument. A weekly session with the counsellor helps the girls immensely. Das' only regret is that she cannot take in more girls. "Sometimes the girls need to be hospitalised because of the trauma and their responses to it," says Das. "If only we had access to a plot of land or a 1,000 sq ft area, we'd be able to help out many more girls," she rues.

Website kranti-india.org

Photograph by MANDAR DEODHAR



THE WAY FORWARD

Samyak Chakrabarty, 26,
Green Batti Project

Pairing young professionals with children from under-resourced communities, the Green Batti Project initiated by Samyak

Chakrabarty's Social Quotient, is a mentoring programme aimed at imparting life-skills and a dose of hope and confidence to the children, enabling them to reach their potential.

The Beginning Started in December 2014, the programme had close to 500 mentors volunteering across the city during their first term. Chakrabarty, who first understood the fate of children from underprivileged communities about three years ago when he decided to adopt a Marathi-medium school in Dharavi, found that apart from good-quality education the children were also lacking a positive influence in their lives. "Either their parents are not around because they're constantly working or there's domestic abuse. They have no source of inspiration," he reveals.

The Process The mentoring programme, which consists of two-hour sessions once every week for six weeks, involves no academic work at all. It is based on activities such as getting the mentee to write stories, create PowerPoint presentations about themselves or a timeline that states the important events of life, how it has impacted them.

"Sometimes issues of domestic abuse come to the fore this way and the mentors are trained to tackle such situations effectively," he explains. The mentors are paired with children according to gender and location. While the former is for safety reasons, the latter is a matter of convenience. "We've had a 10 to 15 percent rejection rate, in such cases we replace. It happens. It's human to not get along," he adds. Chakrabarty, aiming to hit two birds with one stone, hopes that more people realise how simple volunteering can be.

Website thegreenbattiproject.in

THE POTHOLE PURGE

Rupesh Mandal, 33, Lokesh Khemani, 24, Edward Katchira, 30, Suraj Singh, 28, *Spothole App*

The Spothole App allows users to report and track the GPS location of potholes across the city. Through this technology, the team behind the app want to bridge the gap between citizens and the authorities, who they hope will work together to create a pothole-free Mumbai.

The Beginning Last year, independent creative director Rupesh Mandal tied up with designer and photographer Lokesh Khemani and Edward Katchira, digital consultant to initiate the Fill In The Potholes Project. Through the website, they took a humorous view of the sad state of the city's roads and used creative ways to draw attention to the problem. "It was great fun, but then we thought why not try and find a solution," says Mandal. Inspired by a directive issued by the Bombay High Court to have a simple redressal mechanism where citizens

can report the presence of potholes to the BMC, the team got developer Suraj Singh on board and began working on the Spothole App. "The app is a tool to monitor potholes. We're hoping to inculcate a civic sense in citizens, who can help by reporting a pothole," explains Mandal.

The Process Currently in beta version, the app is available for Android operating systems. "When you spot a pothole, just click a photo, upload it and mark its GPS location," explains Khemani. The app has already seen around 200 entries since its launch in June. Once they have identified the worst hit area in the city, the team will approach the ward responsible for the area and present them with the data. "Our final goal is to not have a single pothole in the city," says Mandal.

Website fillinthepotholes.com

Photograph by MANDAR DEODHAR





Photograph by DANESH JASSAWALA

COOL CABS

Mahak Malik, 25, Girish Narayandass, 29, Nathalie Gordon, 27, Sanket Avlani, 28, *Taxi Fabric*

Giving designers a unique, unrestricted platform to showcase their ideas, Taxi Fabric is simultaneously changing the face of the city's iconic kaali-peeli taxis. Design doesn't just perform a function, but can also create an impact, they believe.

The Beginning "I used to take a lot of taxis from my home in Five Gardens in Wadala to work and I'd always notice the fabric during my rides," reveals Sanket Avlani. It wasn't long before the idea of creating fabric for the taxis' worn seats struck him. He teamed up with friends Mahak Malik, Girish Narayandas and now Nathalie Gordon who is helping with their crowdfunding campaign, and the Taxi Fabric collective was born. Launched in April this year, five Taxi Fabric-upholstered taxis are currently plying in the city. Behind the driver's

seat is a label that gives you the designer's name and a link to the TF website, which features their work and gives you their contact details.

The Process "A shocking number of designers interested in participating in the project have got in touch," reveals Avlani. Luckily, their crowdfunding campaign has been very successful and the team now has enough money for the makeover of 30 other taxis. Not restricting the project to Mumbai-based designers, the team is keen to have the designs centred on the city. So the fabric Avlani designed pays an ode to the iconic dabbawalas as well as the common man travelling by train. Apart from giving designers a platform, through this project they've also helped bring Mumbai's iconic taxis in the limelight.

Website taxifabric.org



Photograph by DANESH JASSAWALA

RESTAURANT REVIEW / DESI DELI

FUSION FLAVOURS

Lolita Sarkar and her sunny smile greet us warmly as we get ourselves a table at her tiny new eatery in Bandra Reclamation. Because the monsoon has set in, the place is walled in by plastic curtains to protect the tables and chairs from being rained over. The space is small, and the chairs are not as comfortable as we'd like them to be. But the menu looks promising. Lush Lamb Burger, served with skinny fries seasoned with curry leaves, with a perfectly succulent patty topped with grilled apple, Laal mayo and cheddar is almost the best part of our meal. But it's Trucker Tycoon, the sinful dessert we ended our meal with—toast oozing with mascarpone cheese and chocolate—that makes it to the top. Sarkar also prides herself on her hot dog fusions, but because the sausages might be cased in meats you don't eat, it's best to state your diet choices before you order one. We tried the Puerto Rican Desi Dog, an interesting combination of a chicken sausage, grilled pineapple, lemony garlic sauce and roasted peppers and coriander. Inspired by a Mexican street food regular, the Loco Lamb Tamales brings in some interesting flavours to the menu. A cornmeal wrap steamed in a banana leaf, it is definitely an acquired taste.

Meal for two Rs 1,000 At Shop 1, Pearl Haven CHS, 86, Chapel Road, Reclamation, Bandra West
Tel 26408333

■ By Moeena Halim



A Salt Oasis

Salt covers almost every inch of the three therapy rooms at Salt Escape, making them look more like snow havens rather than a wellness retreat. But it isn't the saltspread over the floor or the stuff covering the walls that is meant to help relieve symptoms of respiratory and skin ailments. Jamsheed Mehta and his wife Lyla first heard about Halotherapy or salt therapy in 2013, when the former realised it was a great way to control his rhinitis. A visit to the spa in the UK, which is recognised by the National Health Services (NHS) as a treatment for Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), had him sold on the idea. "All our equipment is from the Salt Cave. The challenge here is to maintain the humidity and temperature," says Mehta. Unlike the salty air by the seaside, the salt here must be very low on moisture to help clear the mucous build up in the respiratory tracts and aid those with asthma, bronchitis, sinusitis, colds and flu, chest infections and cough. **At Salt Escape, Hanuman Building, Ground Floor, 300, Perin Nariman Street, Behind Reserve Bank of India**
Tel 2269 0034

■ By Moeena Halim

Parsi Platters

About four years ago, when Mumbai was full of angst about the Irani cafés closing in quick succession, restaurateur AD Singh decided to pay tribute to this dying tradition. Serving a combination of Parsi and 'Bambaiyya' food, he has opened four outlets of SodaBottleOpenerWala in Delhi, Hyderabad and Bangalore. Now he brings it back to Mumbai. The city's rich tradition of Irani cafés means that people's memories are often much stronger than reality and Singh wanted to be absolutely sure of his product before he launched here. "What's amusing is that we have Parsis coming in who say their mothers' Dhansak is better. We've put up a sign—"Arre dikra, we know your mother's Dhansak is better, but try ours," he laughs.

His own memories of Irani Cafés are linked with the time Leopold became a pub in the 1990s. But rather than replicating any one single place, they have drawn from the larger story of the Irani Café. "Our tribute is more conceptual, in terms of the menu as well as the ambience and feel. So you'll find those boards that had the rules of the establishment printed on them—no laughing loudly and no picking nose and so on. We've also imitated the way that the owners sat next to the door, the glass-topped tables and chequered table clothes," he says.

Starting with Bandra Kurla Complex, the restaurateur hopes to launch outlets in Colaba, Lower Parel and Andheri as well.

■ By Moeena Halim

In Conversation

AD Singh



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The Men's Health Guy
GAURAV ARORA
"When I was fat, I had no
confidence, no friends, no
girlfriends!" P64

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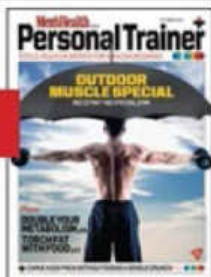
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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The hand that feeds Mumbai, its F&B trade, is being weighed down by red-tape

According to the India Food Services Report 2013, commissioned by the National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI), the incidence of Indians eating out has more than doubled in the last fifty years. In Mumbai, a city with a frenetic pace of living and working, this spurt in demand for food services is manifold. The city's F&B establishments provide its citizens a vital service, making it imperative to reexamine certain governmental policies and practices that have been impacting this industry adversely.

Any business must begin with paperwork. And Mumbai's restaurateurs are all too familiar with this archaic, long and tedious process. For example the 'Eating House' license requires clearance from ten separate officials from various government offices including the health, fire and environment departments of the BMC. The rules for procurement of this license need simplification. The registration process should be made mandatory once in three or four years and not be an annual encumbrance. The NRAI would also welcome merging the FSSAI and 'Eating House' licenses – both these documents enlist a different set of requirements at the moment.

Mumbai's eateries, like those in the rest of the country, must have scores of licenses from different governmental bodies to keep their establishments running. The need of the hour is a single-window licensing system where a business owner hands over the necessary paperwork to one point of interface within the BMC, for clearances from all the requisite departments.

The need for these multiple licenses and NOC certificates has also become provocation for constant harassment by the authorities. From parking to the placement of patio furniture, everything invites the attention of the local police. The industry needs clearer guidelines on the norms of the 'Eating House' license, and more leniency for parking rules and closure timings.

Another major issue for the city's restaurant trade has been the levying of service tax and service charge. In the 2013 Union Budget, the Finance Minister added a clause that made it necessary for an establishment to have a valid liquor license, in order for the service tax on food to be applicable. The implication of this move

was that any restaurant with air conditioning had to levy service tax on the bill, thereby also affecting what the customer pays for a meal in self-service, delivery and quick service restaurants (QSR). Given the fact that this segment of the F&B sector is relatively more price-sensitive, the introduction of service tax had an adverse effect on the business of such restaurants. In a series of meetings with relevant government authorities, representatives of the NRAI argued that the implementation of this tax was not just impacting business, but the revenue was also being generated for government coffers.

Service charge, on the other hand, is something restaurateurs all over the country, including Mumbai, support. The battle here is being waged on two fronts—with competent authorities and with the public at large, sections of which believe they shouldn't have to pay a small percentage of their food bill towards the services being rendered at the restaurant. The NRAI opposed a recent order passed by authorities in Chandigarh to remove service charge in restaurants and also responded to the Competition Commission of India when they flagged this issue. The authorities have since withdrawn the order.

The bigger and more difficult battle persists—dealing with an entrenched belief system that denies service staff their right to a small emolument in lieu of their hard work towards enhancing a customer's experience. In America, tipping an amount equal to 20 percent of the bill is standard practice while Britons pay 12.5 percent of the bill. Indian restaurants charge a maximum of 10 percent service charge on the bill. Tips or service charge motivate, among other benefactors, even the kitchen staff to do more than the "job" they are paid for. It is not just a transaction of money, but one of mutual generosity and appreciation.

These are some of the multiple issues the NRAI is tirelessly engaged in resolving on behalf of Mumbai's restaurateurs. The city's F&B establishments provide a great service to its people, and it's about time the authorities gave it backing to enable such facilities to a city that needs them.

GUEST COLUMN



RIYAAZ AMLANI,
President, NRAI

**THE BATTLE HERE
IS BEING WAGED
ON TWO FRONTS-
WITH COMPETENT
AUTHORITIES AND
WITH THE PUBLIC
AT LARGE**

*Riyaaz Amlani, President, NRAI &
CEO & MD, Impresario Entertainment
& Hospitality Pvt. Ltd.*

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BUTTON MASALA

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**COVER STORY****Style Files****s-3**

With quirky creations, Gujarat's young designers are upping the quirk factor in their designs.

BUZZ**Into the City****s-8**

A checklist on where to eat and what to shop for.

Cover photo by Danesh Jassawala

OUR PICK of the month

Ride On**August 30**

Take you children out for a cycling ride with City on Cycles, an event organised by aProCh.org to reclaim city spaces for children. Participants will cycle along the Waterfront Usmanpura Garden as an initiative to make the city more cyclist-friendly and encourage people to ride, which is a healthier and non-polluting way of commuting. **Timing** 7a.m. to 9 a.m. At Riverfront Usmanpura Garden



Want to tell us about an event? A new store? A restaurant? People doing interesting things? Anything newsworthy? Please email us at: simplygujarati@intoday.com

STYLE FILES

BUTTONS AND BANDS REPLACE THREAD AND POCKETS MAKE AN APPEARANCE ON GOWNS AS GUJARAT'S YOUNG DESIGNERS UP THE QUIRK FACTOR IN THEIR DESIGNS

By ADITI PAI

Buttons and Bands

ANUJ SHARMA, 41 ■

YOU WON'T FIND SEWING machines, scissors and fashioning tools at Anuj Sharma's Paldi workshop. The designer works tool-less. His only designing accessories are buttons and rubber bands. "I don't use any machinery, only fabric and buttons that help me connect my fabric," says Sharma, founder of the brand, Button Masala. He uses bands and buttons to connect fabric to fashion skirts, dresses, tops and bags. Besides being quirky, it's all about sustainable fashion for Sharma, an alumnus of the National Institute of Design.

❖ **FASHION WITH A CAUSE** Sharma doesn't use electricity for machinery and his clothes can easily be fashioned into another look so the fabric isn't wasted.

❖ **GO LOCAL** With a focus on sustainable fashion, Sharma uses affordable and easily available fabrics and "gives them value". So, he's got polyesters, georgettes, cottons and silks in his collection.

❖ **WORKSHOP TO SHOP** Sharma launched Button Masala in 2009 and has done six seasons of the Lakme Fashion Week since then. He retails from various stores in Ahmedabad, Mumbai, Goa and Kolkata. **Price** Rs 3,000 to Rs 10,000

Contact [facebook.com/buttonmasala](https://www.facebook.com/buttonmasala)

Photograph by DANESH JASSAWALA



Old Meets New

NOOPUR ANITA BALIA, 26 ■

HER STORE, YOUNG TRUKK, spells quirk with offbeat designs and accessories. But with the new collection, the NIFT Gandhinagar graduate tries something unconventional in a different way. In the new six ensemble line, Bali has combined stylish modern silhouettes with rogan art, an ancient art form from Kutch which, she explains, is practiced by only the Khatri family in the region. For this, Balia took six cut outfits to the Nirona village in Kutch where the Khatri family lives and asked them to paint on them.

✦ **DIYING ART** Believed to have Persian links, rogan, which means oil-based in Persian, is a form of drawing paintings and designs using paint made with castor oil. Primary colours are added to the oil and mixed for hours to get a stringy consistency. A sharp tool is dipped into it and the artists then set a design on cloth. ✦ **RETRO TOUCH** Balia's line has a 1970s touch to it so she's created ensembles with layered skirts, flared bellbottoms and bell sleeved jackets in khadi. The rogan art is used to dress up the plain outfits in solid colours with designs on collars or sleeves.

✦ **EAST MEETS WEST** The quirk element continues into her other collections as Balia recommends dhoti drape sarees paired with crop tops decorated with generous handwork as the new trend for the festive season.

Price Rs 5,000 to 12,000

Contact [facebook.com/youngtrukk](https://www.facebook.com/youngtrukk)



Photograph by NAFIS KHAN

Pocket Square

SWATI GORADIA, 31 ■

THINK POCKET SQUARES ARE ONLY FOR MEN'S wear? Vadodara-based designer Swati Goradia shows how the pocket can be innovatively used on tunics, dresses and smart shirts for women. A mass media graduate from Mumbai and a self-taught designer, Goradia moved to Vadodara in 2010 and then held her first trunk show in 2013 in which she created a collection of tunics and shirts from organza under her brand Sartorial. Now, the focus is on pockets—hand-block printed in vibrant colours with ethnic designs and motifs painted with natural dyes. “Old meets the new in this collection. It’s a different take on androgynous designs,” she says.

❖ **PIECING THE POCKETS** Goradia gets creative with the pockets. Some are layered, others come in bias cuts. A simple tunic in solid colours in her collection is accentuated by a bright orange pocket. ❖ **LOCAL TOUCH** Goradia uses natural vegetable dyes and works with local artisans. All stitching and embroidery is done by hand. Her latest collection is inspired by Gujarat’s local crafts and origami, a paper art form. ❖ **NEW ON THE RACKS** Unlike most who stick to feminine cuts and styles, Goradia’s collection focuses on androgynous designs. She first made those two years ago. **Price** Rs 5,000 to Rs 18,000 **Contact** facebook.com/pages/Sartorial

MARILYN MONROE CARICATURES ON CROP TOPS AND POP ICONS PRINTED ON

skirts—that's what Kalgi Shahs' Rutbaa is all about. It's a young and quirky fashion brand that's "meant for the free-spirited" woman. "It's aimed at people who don't follow rules and don't like anything that's run of the mill," says Shah, who has done a year-long course in garment production and apparel design from NIFT Gandhinagar. So, instead of sticking to just western or Indian wear, Shah blends the traditional with the contemporary and "manipulates a current fashion trend", as she describes her design style. ❖ **MIX AND MATCH** Shah brings an Indian touch with western silhouettes and designs. So, she uses ikat and chanderi for crop tops, the current fashion trend, or smart self created prints on gamthi cottons. **Price** Rs 2,250 to Rs 6,500 **Contact** [facebook.com/RutbaabyKalgi](https://www.facebook.com/RutbaabyKalgi)

RutbaabyKalgi





Photograph by SHAILESH RAVAL

Printing Style NILESH PARASHAR, 31

WITH HIS APTLY NAMED BRAND NAUTANKY, Niles Parashar creates ample drama in his designs. Smart silhouettes and contemporary digital prints meet khadi and silk in his creations. This season is all about quirky shirt dresses in unusual cuts—long, button down outfits that can be worn as daywear or paired with smart accessories and boots for a dramatic evening look. “Khadi is my USP because it gives a beautiful fall and makes the prints or embroidery stand out,” he says.

❖ **FESTIVE TIME** The new festive line is all about kurtas, gowns, dresses and kalidars with designs inspired by letters and ample traditional embroidery. Since it's occasion wear,

Parashar brings in silk and chanderi with the khadi.

❖ **ART MEETS FASHION** A touch of quirk continues into his autumn winter collection which will be on the racks next month. In this, Parashar draws inspiration from Persian prints and designs. “It's a fashion take on the infrastructure and buildings from the Persian empire,” he says. Parashar makes his own prints and then gets them transferred on to fabrics of his choice. ❖ **IN VOGUE** In keeping with his Indo-Western touch, Parashar's favourite festive wear would be dhotis and drape skirts teamed with embroidered kurtas.

Price Starts at Rs 8,000

Contact nautanky.com

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Photograph by DANESH JASSAWALA

RESTAURANT REVIEW WAFFLEBAY

SWEET ENDINGS

In a city that loves its ice creams and pastries, there's a new dessert destination that brings froyo as a post-dinner option. Yogurtbay and Wafflebay, which made its debut in Mumbai four years ago, recently opened its first store in Ahmedabad, bringing to the city a range of frozen flavoured yogurt and waffles. For the weight watchers, yogurt is a preferred dessert option with lesser calories than creamy ice creams.

DIY YOGURTS They have a range of flavours like blueberry, Oreo, red velvet and French vanilla, but if you like a blend of different flavours, go for the salted caramel, a nutty sweet yogurt with a hint of salt. If that's not enough, then dress up the yogurt with toppings like baked cheesecake, cookie sauce and almond fudge. If you want a feel of ice cream, then ask them to pop the scoop of yogurt into a freshly made waffle cone. The Kit-Kat flavoured one is among the best here.

ON THE GO The store transforms the waffle from a breakfast staple to a dessert on-the-go by putting it on a stick. The Wafflebay section of the menu again has a range of flavours like blueberry, caramel custard, red velvet, liege and Nutella that top the waffles.

Price Rs 350 for two

At 39, Sunrise Park Road Gurukul, Vastrapur, Ahmedabad
Tel 07940307120

■ By Aditi Pai

STAGE ACT

August 22

If you're in the mood for some good entertainment, then head to the Lakshmi Palace where Cineplay is staging *Adhe Adhure*. Featuring Lillete Dubey, Mohan Agashe and Ira Dubey, the play traces the journey of Savitri, a middle aged woman who, troubled by her domestic life, tries to find happiness in extra marital relationships. But is disappointed.

TIME 7 p.m.

AT Lakshmi Vilas Palace, Vadodara

